

Battle of the Brits: Henry Fairlie on Alexander Cockburn

ROBERT KUTTNER: THE CASE AGAINST AUSTERITY • FRED BARNES: THE COLLAPSE OF CONSERVATISM

BACHEV'S
OTHER
WOMAN

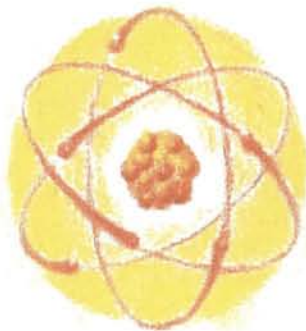
THE NEW REPUBLIC

SAFE NUCLEAR POWER

Why the industry and the critics both shun it.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

TWO DEAL-MAKERS

"The Party acts as the initiator and generator of ideas, the organizer and guiding force and, I would say, the guarantor of *perestroika* in the interests of consolidating socialism, in the interests of the working people. The Party has assumed a truly historic responsibility. In 1917, Lenin said: 'Having started a revolution we must go all the way.' The same is true for *perestroika*: the Party will go all the way."—*Perestroika* by Mikhail Gorbachev (Harper & Row)

"Frankly, I'm not too big on parties, because I can't stand small talk. Unfortunately, they're part of doing business, so I find myself going to more than I'd like—and

then trying hard to leave early."—*Trump* by Donald Trump (Random House)

As human beings, they couldn't be more different. One is a power-mad egomaniac. The other is modest and philosophical. One loves glitz and escorts a vulgar, social-climbing wife. The other is a natty but tasteful dresser with an elegant, witty spouse. One claims to be a Republican, but is courted by Democrats. The other claims to be a Socialist, but is courted by Republicans. One makes no secret of his hunger for world domination. The other aspires only to universal peace and the betterment of mankind. One is a great New York real estate developer, the other merely leader of the Soviet Union. But Donald Trump and Mikhail Gorbachev have something in common this Christmas season: a book to peddle.

In fact, *Perestroika: The Art of the Deal* and *Trump: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (or is it the other way around?) have a lot in common. Both are written, or ghostwritten, in that chatty, ostensibly confessional mode so popular these days, full of personal revelation and cracker-barrel philosophy. Trump: "I've always had a personal thing about cleanliness, but I also believe it's a very

good investment." Gorbachev: "To do something better, you must work an extra bit harder. I like this phrase: working an *extra bit harder*. For me it is not just a slogan, but a habitual state of mind."

Both authors draw on their own past to illustrate their philosophies of life. Trump describes borrowing his younger brother's building blocks, promising to return them, and then not doing it. He nostalgically recalls youthful hours spent poring over "listings of FHA foreclosures."

Gorbachev, discussing the wisdom of Lenin, says, "I shall adduce my own experience to corroborate this point," and goes on to describe a "gala session" at which "I referred to Lenin's tenets on the need for taking into account the requirements of objective economic laws, on planning and cost accounting," and so on. "The audience enthusiastically supported this reference to Lenin's ideas," he reports modestly. Lenin is undoubtedly the inspiration for a later chapter heading: "On to Full Cost Accounting!"

Both books, naturally, are of special interest on the subject of negotiations. Trump says: "My style of deal-making is quite simple and straightforward. I aim very high, and then I just keep pushing and pushing and pushing to get what I'm after." Gorbachev's philosophy is quite the reverse. "We must tackle problems in a spirit of cooperation rather than animosity," he recommends. He notes, however—rather patronizingly, I thought—that "emotional outbursts are an inevitable part of any complicated endeavor."

Although Trump is eager to appear tough and Gorbachev is eager to appear sweet, both are vain enough to temper these images with contrary anecdotes. "I always take calls from my kids," Trump reveals, "no matter what I'm doing." What's more, in 1986 he went to pay his last respects to an elderly fellow zillionaire, even though "I happened to have an extremely important business meeting in my office on the day of his funeral in Chicago." Tragically, the meeting could never be rescheduled. But "I have no regrets."

By sheer coincidence, a dramatic highlight of Gorbachev's book was occurring about the same time. It seems that certain elements were pressuring our hero to cancel the 27th Party Congress. "Of course, the Congress could have been postponed," he concedes. "This opinion was persistently expressed. . . . But the approaches of the stagnation period that had affected all of us were felt to be be-

continued on page 42

"Brilliantly illuminates the inner history of the arms race."

—MARTIN SHERWIN, Tufts University

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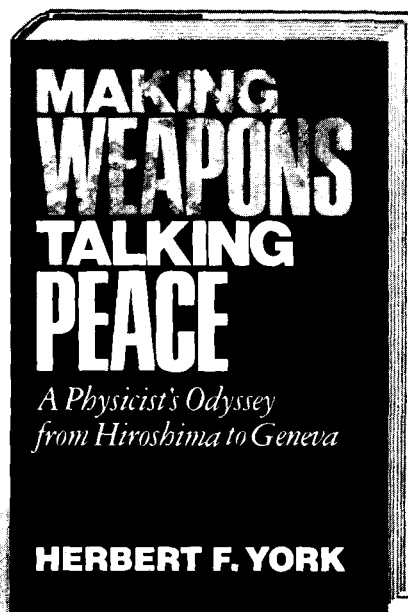
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This refusal to accept the 'conventional wisdom' has brought results. Between January 1, 1982 and December 31, 1986, the UFCW organized 316,441 workers, and in the first nine months of



The UFCW, 1.3 million members strong, making a difference for workers, community and country.

this year added another 50,000 workers to its membership roles.

It wasn't easy. Many times organizing the unorganized required picket lines, boycotts, and community pressure to convince employers to be truly neutral and let their workers make the decision themselves free from fear and coercion.

The UFCW also took its case to the public and the workers through innovative uses of the media, and extensively used polling techniques and other research to pinpoint workers' concerns.

But many employers don't stop fighting their workers' desires to join a union even after the workers have made their choice in government-run elections. In fact, according to AFL-CIO figures, fewer than one-half of the workers involved in a victorious organizing election are ever covered by a union contract.

That's why the UFCW strategies also emphasize negotiating the all-important first contract so that the new union members can ratify it in a democratic vote. More than 90 percent of the workers who chose to be represented by the UFCW also gain the protections of a UFCW contract within one year.

My goal is for the UFCW to bring the benefits of collective bargaining to an additional 100,000 workers a year, every year, by the end of this decade. That's the type of organizing commitment that the American labor movement and a democratic society needs.”

William H. Wynn
International President



United Food & Commercial Workers
1775 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006

CORRESPONDENCE

TORTUOUS POLICY

To the editors:

It was unclear from "Torture in Israel" (November 23) whether TNR objects to physical or psychological pressure on terrorist suspects, or to the absence, from the Israeli commission report castigating Shin Beth agents for lying to the courts about it, of comprehensive guidelines for the use of such methods. If the former, please note that terrorist incidents will continue, territorial settlement or no territorial settlement. I defy you to argue that Israeli police should be precluded from intimidating a suspect who may have planted a bomb or may have knowledge that could prevent murder. If the latter, note that the Landau Commission explicitly ruled out torture and humiliation of the sort inconsistent with basic human dignity. Beyond such elementary prohibitions, regulations need to be developed on a case-by-case basis to have any firm grounding in experience. That, indeed, is why it is crucial that the security services in Israel tell the truth to the courts. It is why the Landau Commission hit the nail on the head when it singled out official perjury, rather than official "pressure," for the harshest criticism.

SETH A. HALPERN
Scarsdale, New York

To the editors:

Naturally the testimony of Palestinians, as well as reports from Amnesty International, were not enough to convince TNR that Palestinian prisoners have been tortured. Now that you admit it, you write as though the real damage were not to Palestinian bodies and minds, but to the soul of Israel. As though that were not sufficiently callous, you call "honest" the argument that torture is inevitable during a war, a contemptible argument.

TONY NASSAR
Freeville, New York

PAPER BORDERS

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke did a fine job of focusing on the moral issues of U.S. immigration laws ("Moral Borders," November 23). As an immigration lawyer, I focus on the legal issues involved.

Both of us ignore a more fundamental issue, which is the practicality of border control at all. Look at the problem from the flip side: repressive states worldwide use brute force to try to lock their populations in, yet people risk death all the time to escape to freedom. Are the Western democracies so naive as to believe that mere laws can lock people out? The United States is not about to build physical walls, and effective civil and criminal penalties against employers of undocumented workers would entail such a radical curtailment of civil liberties, and incur such fantastic expense, that the cure would be much worse than the supposed disease. The tides of human migration are largely beyond the control of governments, and any meaningful discussion of immigration policy must account for that fact. To ignore it is to delude ourselves into thinking that our laws are as effective as the concertina wire atop the Berlin Wall.

DANIEL M. KOWALSKI
Littleton, Colorado

OLD MONEY

To the editors:

In an otherwise cogent critique of the bland Reagan response to Wall Street's Black Monday, TNR uses the current cliché that "the average elderly person is already better off than the average worker" ("Reagan's 'Correction,'" November 16). Not so. The median income in 1985 of households headed by persons 65 years and older was \$13,254. For all households it was \$23,618, according to the Census Bureau's 1987 Statistical Abstract. Families with one earner in 1984 had a median income of \$20,291; with two earners, \$31,707; with no earner, \$11,377. The last group includes some young families (unmarried woman with children) but comprises primarily older persons. A perception of greater improvement of the economic status of the elderly, thanks to the protections afforded by Social Security, has been translated into an impression of a better overall status.

A recent study by the Social Security Administration indicates that from 1947 to 1967 the incomes of non-aged family units rose faster than those of aged family units. The reverse was true for 1967-84—the median real income rose

3.2 percent annually among aged family units and 1.2 percent for non-aged units. But during both periods and for the postwar years as a whole, aged family units continued to have a relatively low income, especially when compared with the income of persons who are middle-aged.

JACOB FISHER
Sarasota, Florida

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

To the editors:

Now that the Iran-*contra* hearings report is out, let's see if I have this right. According to the White House, it's OK for retired Gen. Richard Secord and arms merchant Albert Hakim to conduct foreign policy for the United States, but not for House Speaker Jim Wright.

HARRY CIMRING
Los Angeles, California

ILL REPUTE

To the editors:

Regarding "Fools on the Hill" by Timothy Noah (November 16), Princeton University Press's publishing division first learned of *A House Of Ill Repute* by reading about it in the *New York Times*. Along with Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press, our printing division aggressively seeks work from other publishers in order to remain financially viable. Neither *A House Of Ill Repute* nor numerous other books printed by Princeton University Press have any connection with the imprint of Princeton University Press. To be "published by Princeton University Press," a book must be accepted by the Editorial Board (a group of Princeton faculty members) after at least two academic reviews. *A House Of Ill Repute* is not an appropriate title for a university press list and certainly not suitable for our own editorial plans.

WALTER H. LIPPINCOTT
Director, Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 28, 1987

NO PARDON

Republicans in and around the administration are urging President Reagan to short-circuit the process of justice by pardoning Oliver North and John Poindexter, in advance of indictment and trial, for any legal consequences of their actions in Iranamok. The president apparently is considering the possibility. Reagan has a soft heart for those he considers loyal. He may also be tempted by the notion that avoiding a publicized trial might help put the scandal behind him at last. But by offering a pre-emptive pardon, Reagan would do what more than a year of investigations by journalists, Congress, and the special prosecutor have so far failed to do: tie Iranamok's contempt for law directly to the president himself.

The case for pardon goes like this. North and Poindexter are good men who believed that they were acting on the president's wishes and in his best interests. Men of action, they struggled against a suffocating foreign policy bureaucracy and a weak, vacillating Congress. They may have "made mistakes," but they were patriots, and patriots shouldn't go to jail. This summary is appealing, but hardly accurate. It's true that North and Poindexter were not motivated by personal greed, but other equally self-aggrandizing motives were not absent. In any event, even the highest motives don't give public officials 007-style free license. That's what the rule of law is all about.

Just what was it North and Poindexter did that got them—and the country—into so much trouble? With William Casey's help, these two created a foreign policy network dangerous both in its incompetence and in its very existence. Dubbed "the Enterprise," the network con-

ducted critical operations without informing Congress, sometimes (apparently) not even the president. Knowing that such a group was anathema to America's constitutional checks and balances, North and Poindexter repeatedly lied to Congress about its existence.

The Enterprise's original goal was to funnel private contributions to the Nicaraguan *contras*. But in the summer of 1985, the government of Israel proposed to this government that selling missiles to Iran could win the release of American hostages held in Beirut. President Reagan OK'd the operation, and put the NSC—and therefore North and Poindexter—in charge of overseeing it. Later, the Enterprise bypassed Israel completely and sold arms to Iran all by itself. But the hope that Iranian terrorists could be so easily bought off was naive and stupid. It also contradicted American principles (not to mention the perpetrators' own swaggering machismo). Time and again, the members of the Enterprise delivered American weapons to the Iranians, only to find that the Iranians wouldn't deliver on their promises.

Even after it was obvious that the "Iran initiative" would never free all the hostages, North and Poindexter continued the arms sales. Why? Because the two had discovered that profits from the arms shipments could be passed along to the *contras*. But even in this diversion the Enterprise was never very successful. Through private contributions and arms sales, the Enterprise raised \$48 million. Only \$16.5 million found its way to the *contras*. At least \$6.6 million was diverted to North recruits Richard Secord and Albert Hakim, and another \$4 million was held in

Swiss accounts with no sign of imminent shipment to the *contras*.

North and Poindexter maintained their pattern of deceit when the story broke in November 1986. North shredded and altered critical NSC documents, while lying about the U.S. role in Israel's arms shipments to Iran and helping to put out the cover story that some of the arms shipments were really shipments of oil-drilling equipment. Poindexter lied to Congress, claiming ignorance of the Israeli shipments, and subsequently destroyed a presidential finding that showed the opposite.

Every administration has its foreign policy nightmares. The important question about this one is whether any laws were broken to achieve it. In some cases the answer is clear: North and Poindexter have admitted they lied to Congress on numerous occasions, a felony. The obstruction of congressional investigations through such lies and the shred-

ding of documents is also criminal. Other issues are trickier. North and Poindexter may have greased their way around the Boland amendment, designed to prevent aid to the *contras*, which was signed into law by the president in October 1984. Their actions were certainly contrary to its intent. North and Poindexter may also have violated the National Security Act, which requires a "significant anticipated intelligence activity" to be disclosed to Congress; an executive order requiring a presidential finding for covert operations conducted by a group other than the CIA; and the Arms Control Export Act.

There are any number of legal issues regarding criminal liability under these laws, as well as factual questions that remain unresolved even now. But a presidential pardon in advance of indictments would essentially terminate special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh's investigation and make such resolution impossible. If President Reagan real-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This
Week

Last
Week Weeks
on Chart

1. LORE AND PEACE ✓

1

9

Summit. If rhetoric matters, something basic has happened. The U.S. had long defined peace in terms of deterrence. Treaties meant, at best, "a safer world." Idealized, lion-and-lamb peace was the scorned Soviet line. An ethereal Reagan adopted this line when he proposed SDI, and now the so-called U.S. strategy and much of the culture resonate with it. For good or ill, has somebody finally lost the '50s cold war?

2. HIGH MARX ✓

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1

Gorbomania. In the Brokaw interview, Gorbachev's answers were clumsy, doctrinaire, and raised questions about internal Soviet politics. Never mind. He's got vigor, an Italian tailor, and Raisa. The result was soaring approval ratings and a booming market in Cyrillic T-shirts. Forget Errol Flynn. Gorbachev's the pop successor to Oliver North and Spuds MacKenzie.

3. RIGHT OFF THE WALL ✓

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1

Conservatives. Among Reagan's legacies count a conservative movement torn asunder. The Adam Smith Tie crowd is in descent anyway; now hard and soft sides of the movement are emerging from Reagan's appalling network anchor interview. This can have serious ripples at the convention. Reagan may be sending the Republicans back to the Goldwater days, where he found them.

4. FLYING START ✓

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1

START. There's an eerie quality to the START discussion. The treaty is approaching like a runaway train, but even supporters of arms reductions keep repeating that there's not enough time; it sounds like an incantation. As for the Soviets, they're visibly rubbing their hands. The awakening notion is that SDI is already irrelevant, buried by a strict ABM Treaty and Congress.

5. OVER THERE ✓

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1

Decoupling. The decoupling debate—the U.S. may abandon Europe—is now under way. Though fueled originally by the arms reduction atmosphere, it has been inflated by America's diminishing sense of its capacities, plus a grass-roots view that since Europe is

rich and hates us to boot, the hell with them. A lively topic in Europe, decoupling is becoming audible here.

6. CONFIDENCE GAME ✓

2

8

Confidence. Nobody's got a clue about the post-Crash state of consumer confidence, but at least two confidence indices show a negligible recovery from October's drop-off. More ominous is the growing number of economists—still a minority—who believe not that a recession may come next year, but that it has already begun.

7. GUNS ARE US ✓

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1

Toy guns. The move against realistic toy guns may be another facet of Reaganism's decline. Toy guns were out a decade ago. Their comeback was linked to the reromanticized military—the "Rambo" stuff. That the toys are mistaken for the real thing is a suspect excuse. That's been true for decades, and anyway Laser Tag guns—cited in one notorious case—don't look like real guns at all.

8. TELEPHONE COMPANY ✓

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1

Group phone calls. Services allowing callers to enter group conversations with strangers are attracting hundreds of thousands of users. Some link this to willful cocooning (ZC, August 10 & 17), but the real appeal—as the services' promotions make plain—is to the lonely (the secret of the CB fad too). It's too late to regret the implicit social anonymity. In fact, for millions this addresses a hopeless social problem.

9. BORES AND REMEMBRANCE ✓

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1

Post-Reagan memoirs. Despite their numbers, administration memoirs usually sink like cinder blocks. Reagan's crowd will have better luck. The apparent difference between White House p.r. and reality has been enormous, and anybody willing to fill in the blanks is going to sell books. Deaver's copy is already hot stuff, and there are promising reports of others. After Reagan, the Flood.

10. THE CHILDREN'S POWER ✓

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1

Tweens. Marketers have identified a new target group: 9- to 15-year-old "tweens." The kids, too old for kidvid ads but too young for teen revolt spots, will be exploited on their own turf. After all, they are estimated to have up to \$30 billion in their pockets, and may influence another \$40 billion. Industries ranging from clothing to electronics to snacks are trying to win 9-year-olds' hearts. God bless us, every one.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

ly believes what he has said repeatedly—that neither North nor Poindexter broke any laws—he should be eager to see them stand trial and be vindicated. Unless, that is, he doesn't believe in the fairness of the American system of justice.

The president's power to pardon federal criminals is virtually absolute, and apparently includes the power to pardon them in advance of prosecution. But the pardon power is intended to temper justice with mercy, not to avert justice completely. We don't believe a pardon in advance of trial and conviction is *ever* appropriate. But even in the most notorious case—President Ford's pre-emptive pardon of Richard Nixon—the pardoner and, to some extent, the pardonee acknowledged serious wrongdoing. Those urging a pardon of North and Poindexter have no such acknowledgment in mind. They want their heroes vindicated, and to hell with the law. This is wrong. The idea of a pardon is forgiveness, not absolution.

A pre-emptive pardon, finally, would raise the inevitable—and justifiable—suspicion that Reagan was protecting not his devoted servants, but himself. North and Poin-

dexter deserve forgiveness, say their defenders, because they thought they were acting on the president's wishes. The president deserves forgiveness, argue these same people, because he knew nothing about their actions. Check and mate. Who knows what evidence North and Poindexter may yet have that could unravel this conundrum? And who knows how the prospect of a hanging might concentrate their minds? Put another way, who knows how the prospect of a pardon has clouded their memories?

The only way the president can rule out such suspicions is by ruling out any thought of pardon before trial and conviction in open court. After the evidence has been presented and evaluated by a jury, a president—this one or the next—is free to use his pardon power, knowing of course that the citizenry will have a full record on which to judge the wisdom of his action.

At one point in the congressional hearings on the affair, John Poindexter testified that "we were willing to take some risks with the law." In a democracy, those who take risks with the law and get caught should have to pay a price.

FOR INF, WITH REGRETS

The INF treaty signed by President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev is the product of mischievous plotting by American foes of arms control, Ronald Reagan's near-pacifist antipathy toward nuclear weapons, and Gorbachev's shrewd sense for strategic maneuver. It leaves the United States marginally less able to deter a Soviet attack on Western Europe while hardly at all affecting the Soviet capacity to hit European targets and intimidate European populations. The zero-zero INF precedent may well lead to a "third zero" proposal that will denuclearize Europe and leave it menaced by vastly superior Warsaw Pact conventional forces. For these reasons, we wish Reagan and Gorbachev had signed a different INF agreement, one that left our side (and theirs) with at least a few missiles to bolster deterrence. And yet, this is the only INF agreement we have. If the Senate were to refuse to ratify it, it would do grievous damage to America's reputation for reliability, and almost certainly fuel European demands for removal of our missiles without corresponding demands for Soviet withdrawals. So, we support ratification.

Richard Perle denies it, but we are inclined to believe the testimony of his adversaries in and out of the Reagan administration that, as assistant secretary of defense, he came up with the zero-zero proposal in 1981 in the belief that the Soviets would never agree to it and there would never be an arms control deal. The Soviets at the time had more than 600 three-warhead SS-20 missiles already de-

ployed, and the United States had yet to win permission from its allies to deploy a planned 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles. In retrospect, the United States would have been better off agreeing to the so-called "walk-in-the-woods" proposal of U.S. arms negotiator Paul Nitze, whereby the United States would have forgone deployment of Pershing IIs and limited each side to 75 launchers.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union rejected the Nitze proposal—the Soviets because they thought they could scare Europe into forbidding U.S. deployments, and the United States because it seemed to be a cave-in to Soviet pressure. President Reagan won Round 1 of the INF battle when West Germany elected a conservative government and agreed to full INF deployment. Abruptly, the Soviets ended their walkout from the Geneva arms talks.

The Soviets have made a grand success of Round 2 by acceding to every U.S. demand from zero-zero to intrusive verification requirements. They will give up 1,556 warheads to 364 for the United States. American and Soviet inspectors will be permitted to visit factories and former basing areas on an unprecedented basis in order to verify treaty compliance. The Soviets were so forthcoming about verification access, in fact, that the United States got worried about the possibilities for espionage. Good precedents were established on the verification front for any future arms agreements. The result of all this is that Mikhail Gorbachev has become a lion of peace to many in Western Europe.

And yet, the Soviets are left with a huge advantage in both strategic missile warheads (6,400 to 2,200 on land, 10,000 to 8,000 including submarines) and in conventional forces that threaten Europe (2-to-1 in tanks, 3-to-1 in artillery). The United States does retain its strategic arsenal to deter attack, but it is located far away from Europe. The Soviet forces are located on the same landmass.

It's true that the United States also has thousands of battlefield nuclear weapons stationed in Europe, including mines and artillery pieces, but these are presumably the next target of Soviet diplomacy, the "third zero." West Germany, where most of such weapons would explode in a war, is anxious to get rid of them. President Reagan has said he will not agree to that without significant reductions in Soviet conventional power, but he is at a bargaining disadvantage. We may soon see a denuclearized Europe, but one with a still-preponderant Soviet conventional force.

This is the slippery slope on which NATO must find its footing. The Senate simply can't reject the treaty on the basis of the bad precedents it sets. Rejection would discredit the foreign policy coherence of the American government and its reputation for reliability.

Ironically, it's right-wing Republicans—the very people who most worry about the ability of a president to conduct foreign policy unbridled by Congress—who are calling for defeat of the INF pact. These Republicans would find America and the NATO alliance worse off than they are right now if they were to succeed. For if the treaty were to be defeated, it's almost certain that Europe would demand withdrawal of our missiles anyway and the Soviets would profit politically by appearing the more stable of the two superpowers.

What's important now is for the Reagan administration and the allies to be very clear about what the next steps in the arms control process are. Instead of bowing to Gorbachev blandishments to get rid of battlefield weapons, NATO should resolve to modernize its existing nuclear forces and create an incentive for a major Soviet conventional weapons stand-down. Only if the INF leads to greater Western security of that kind should its signing be a cause for rejoicing.

NOTEBOOK

□ SKY IS BLUE—ATTORNEY'S SHOCK CLAIM: "Gaffes" are always big news in Washington, and yet a gaffe, as this journal loves to point out, is when someone tells the truth. A prize gaffe made headlines on December 7 when a Washington lawyer representing R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company accidentally said that cigarettes are bad for your health. This amazing revelation slipped out in discussions with federal health officials over a new, virtually tar-free cigarette. The attorney faced no easy forensic challenge: how to tout the health advantages of this new cigarette without conceding the health disadvantages of all other

cigarettes. Apparently he flubbed it, though Reynolds and the lawyer now claim he never suggested anything so preposterous as the notion that cigarettes are bad for you.

□ WHITHER DECENCY?

F.C.C. Revises Its Ruling on Indecent Programming

—*New York Times*, November 25

FCC Won't Back Off From April Indecency Ruling

—*Los Angeles Times*, same day
(thanks to several California readers)

□ IT WAS NICE WHILE IT LASTED:

MOMENT OF SILENCE IS ENDED IN JERSEY

—*New York Times*, December 2

□ CORRECTION: "A Few Good Taxes" by Lawrence Summers (TNR, November 30) stated incorrectly that Mobil Corporation deducts the cost of its op-ed page advertisements. Even under current law, the cost of explicitly political advertising is not deductible.

□ SPEAKING OF MOBIL... The following are all excerpts from the December issue of *Premiere*, a new movie magazine published by Rupert Murdoch, "which suggest" (observes our spotter, Stephen Bates of Cambridge, Massachusetts) "there may be bad blood between Murdoch and Alistair Cooke":

Don't confuse the work of Stephen Frears with the safe British drama of "Masterpiece Theatre." This is a director who is at home with anarchy. (page 15)

[Oliver] Stone was honored not for safe, "Masterpiece Theatre"-type films that make Academy members feel good about themselves, but for violent, unpleasant films on subjects considered until recently to be box-office poison—Central America and Vietnam. (page 33)

The period settings and social rituals depicted [in John Huston's *The Dead*] are likely to set off viewers' "Masterpiece Theatre" alarms. (page 82)

CAMPAIGN '88

KEMP AND THE CONS

Manchester, New Hampshire

Nackey Loeb, the publisher of the furiously right-wing *Manchester Union-Leader*, wants an unflinching conservative in the White House after Ronald Reagan and the conservative movement to thrive into the next century. On December 1 she endorsed former Delaware Governor

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THE
NEW REPUBLIC

Pierre du Pont for the GOP presidential nomination, though he has virtually no chance of either winning the nomination or uniting the movement. The motives of Meldrim Thomsen, the former New Hampshire governor, are the same as Loeb's. On December 2 he announced his support for Pat Robertson for the Republican nomination. Robertson's prospects are little better than du Pont's. On December 6 Jerry Carmen, who is also from New Hampshire, ran the General Services Administration in Reagan's first term, and now heads Citizens for America, conferred with Representative Jack Kemp. Carmen supported former Senator Paul Laxalt's aborted presidential bid and then tried in vain to get Jeane Kirkpatrick to seek the Republican nomination. But he wouldn't endorse Kemp.

CONSERVATIVES ARE stupid. Faced with the possibility of a non-conservative in the White House and a leaderless conservative movement, they have done the one thing guaranteed to minimize their political impact: they've divided. Some, like Loeb and Thomsen, have gone on a lark with fringe candidates. Others are backing Vice President George Bush or Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole on the ground that, while neither is reliably conservative, it's better to be with a winner. Still others, such as Carmen, are supporting no one. What conservatives haven't done is unite behind the candidate who is both the logical ideological heir to Reagan and the conservative politician with the best chance of being elected president—Kemp. Du Pont and Robertson are neither heirs nor electable. Bush and Dole aren't conservative enough.

The failure to back Kemp is all the more harmful to the movement because conservatives need a leader to be effective in national politics. "The conservative mindset" requires an "authority figure," someone to guide and inspire, says conservative activist Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation. "Liberals, I'm sorry to say, are more attracted to ideas and ideology. They're willing to work together without an authority figure. Liberals don't need to be told which way to go. Conservatives have to be told."

The movement first emerged as a political force when conservatives united behind Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964. And in the dark years after Goldwater's defeat, Reagan stepped forward, enduring as the undisputed conservative leader for more than two decades. Now he's fading, and so is the conservative movement. The Old Right (*National Review*, Goldwater), New Right (Weyrich, NCPAC), Christian Right (Robertson, Jerry Falwell), and libertarians (Cato Institute, Ron Paul) are badly fragmented. They've fallen into stressing their pet issues and playing up differences with other conservatives. They lack national purpose, a president to rally around or a presidential campaign.

Enter Kemp. He has potentially the broadest appeal of any conservative presidential candidate, ever. Reagan, after all, got only 51 percent in 1981 against a discredited incumbent, Jimmy Carter. True, Kemp lacks Reagan's star quality. But he has many of the president's strengths and

practically none of his weaknesses. Kemp cannot match Reagan's storytelling ability, but he manages to explain positions lucidly. He can stir an audience and often does. He is genial, a nice man. Unlike Reagan, Kemp is not prone to gaffes. He doesn't blurt out nutty ideas about trees causing pollution or fascism being the essence of the New Deal. He's at ease in a pinch. After he registered on December 4 to run in the New Hampshire primary, Kemp was hectorated by David Duke, the one-time Ku Klux Klan honcho who's seeking the Democratic presidential nomination. In front of reporters and TV cameras, Duke noisily demanded to know what Kemp is doing to protect the rights of white people. "I am not a racist," Kemp responded. "I believe in equal opportunity for every man and woman irrespective of color, race, creed, or religion." Then he calmly walked away.

KEMP IS NOT a conventional conservative. That is why his appeal is broader and he'd likely be a strong general election candidate. He has sought to concentrate the party's mind on helping the poor, blacks, and Hispanics, not scapegoating them. He calls himself a "progressive conservative." At a rally in Manchester on December 6, he said, "I believe in conservative values, but I also believe in progress and change and technology and moving the country forward. . . . This is going to be a different conservative campaign. We're conservative, but we're compassionate . . . we're constructive . . . we're like the good shepherd and reach out to all people." He doesn't want to cut Social Security or food stamps or Head Start.

For a Republican, he is reasonably friendly with labor and black leaders. When one of the leaders of his campaign in New Hampshire made a racist joke about Jesse Jackson, Kemp canned him. When the League of United Latin American Citizens invited presidential candidates to address its convention in Corpus Christi, Texas, Kemp was the only Republican to appear. He was cheered. He voted for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and economic sanctions against South Africa. Kemp has also repeatedly attacked "corporate welfare," which most Republicans promote. His alternative to the budget compromise includes sharp cuts in Export-Import Bank subsidies to giant corporations, elimination of the Small Business Administration's direct loan program, and a ban on use of Urban Development Action Grants except in poor neighborhoods.

Still, Kemp passes all the conservative litmus tests, save one. He's for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, school prayer, early deployment of Star Wars, dropping the tax rate on capital gains from 28 percent to 15 percent. He's against the new treaty banning medium-range nuclear missiles, any tax increase, protectionism in any form. He does oppose the balanced budget amendment, his one slip from conservative orthodoxy. He's been voting a consistently conservative line since he was elected to the House in 1970. And the most fervent and boisterous conservatives in Congress—Vin Weber, Newt Gingrich—are his acolytes.

Yet conservatives are not beating a path to Kemp's campaign. Why not? Everybody has a different, fuzzy reason. Joe McQuaid, the editor of the *Union-Leader*, says "something is not there" in Kemp. "We agree with most of what he says on issues, so you'd think he'd be the conservative rallying point. But we weren't getting those feelings, and neither were other conservatives." Carmen too says Kemp is right on the issues. "He'd make a great vice president, and with more seasoning for eight years, just as Richard Nixon and George Bush had, he'd be ready to step into the presidency." Todd Domke, a Republican consultant, says Kemp has failed to "demonstrate public leadership, and he hasn't demonstrated private leadership either. He can't convince people individually, one-on-one, to join the team." And so on.

THERE IS A disingenuous quality to these explanations. Kemp, 52, has the attributes to which conservatives have paid lip service for years. He's not mean-spirited or indifferent to suffering and discrimination. He's eager to create a level economic playing field so unbridled capitalism will work its magic. When I asked Kemp to characterize his message, he said, "Growth, jobs, hope, rising tide lifting boats, an alternative to poverty that is demonstrably successful wherever it is tried." That is his message for all audiences, not just conservative ones.

Kemp's problem is that conservatives say they like this message, but really don't. "It's not what Republicans are used to hearing and want to hear," says Tom Winter, the publisher of *Human Events*, the conservative weekly. "It doesn't get their blood going. There's a little dissonance there. It doesn't play." Weber, Kemp's closest ally in the House, says speeches by Kemp "don't touch the raw nerves on gun control, abortion, busing, and all the things people are used to hearing. It's not that Kemp says things that turn people off. It's that he doesn't say sufficient things to turn them on."

For most of his political career, Kemp has followed "the good shepherd model," an adviser says. "This is the opposite of the conservative political model. He doesn't pit one group against another: rich versus poor, white versus black." Kemp is not a hater or a polarizer, and his message is so positive that he never sends the subtle racial signals that other conservatives, particularly Reagan, do. When Reagan denounced the Welfare Queen, no one had to ask her race. When he trashes government spending, everyone knows the recipients are blacks. "Republicans want to hear attacks on government—government is big, government is bad," says Winter. "Jack's message is not anti-government."

Sure, some conservatives have legitimate reasons for opposing Kemp. They have strong doubts about supply-side economics, don't like his tolerance for high budget deficits, and think his call for a gold standard is peculiar. But many of these same conservatives have been perfectly happy with Reagan (until recently) in spite of his similar economic views. The conservative turnoff is not because he's like Reagan, but because he's different.

In fact, Kemp and his aides recognized this. A year ago they brushed aside the advice of John Sears, the Republican strategist, and went after the hard-core conservative voter. "Kemp adopted the Jesse Helms model," says an adviser. He played up his opposition to abortion, began courting the Christian Right, and called for the firing of Secretary of State George Shultz. It didn't work. Kemp was unconvincing in the role of right-wing scourge. Sears says Kemp should have initially sought to develop a broad base among 25- to 45-year-old, largely non-ideological voters attracted to his optimistic message about economic freedom and opportunity. They would have been willing to overlook Kemp's rigidly conservative positions on social issues and foreign policy. Kemp didn't give them much of a chance.

Kemp's bid for the Republican nomination isn't dead, but it's getting there. Unless a gripping issue falls into his lap—Reagan was revived in 1976 when he opposed the Panama Canal treaties—or standoffish conservatives miraculously rush to him, Kemp won't last beyond the early primaries. And the conservative movement will be without the successor to Reagan it desperately needs now, even with 13 months left in Reagan's presidency. The most likely scenario is that Bush or Dole will win the nomination and presidency, and soon break conservatives' hearts. Conservatives have only themselves to blame.

FRED BARNES

POSTCARD WASHINGTON

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

THERE WAS A long period in my life when I went to Washington only to march and demonstrate. I would arrive in the city by bus or car, grab a picket sign, march to or around some public building, listen or (mostly) not listen to approximately 23 speeches, drop off the sign, and go home. Washington for me was a city of monuments, government offices, and picket signs; the only people with whom I talked there were people who had come with me, my fellow marchers, as radically transient as I was. In those days, I never stayed long enough to go to a museum, visit a university, drop in at THE NEW REPUBLIC, or actually meet someone in the government. By now I have done all these things many times, without ever coming to know or like the city, or to feel comfortable there. I am always put off by so much respect for power, so much ambition, so much intrigue, so little time.

I haven't marched in a good while (though I still think of myself as ready-to-march), and it was only after listening to Tom Brokaw's interview with Mikhail Gorbachev that I decided to join the march for Soviet Jews on December 6. Never has Gorbachev sounded more like a conventional

Soviet bureaucrat than in explaining why Jewish immigration posed a security risk for the Soviet Union. Brokaw didn't ask about a freer life for Jews who wanted to stay in the country: I suspect that would pose an ever greater risk. Suddenly it seemed to me important for American Jews (and other Americans) to express solidarity with Russian Jews (and other Russians). I have to add that my daughter at college realized this before I did; maybe the young are even readier-to-march. But should the rest of us, feeling our years, concede this? I also had a niece in the march who had come all the way from Madison, 15 hours by bus, and we ended up walking with her in a group of people who, by the banners they carried and the songs they sang, instantly recalled all my other marches.

In many ways, however, this was a different crowd. There were more people my own age, coming from synagogues and Jewish organizations (and a few trade unions) across the country; towns and suburban communities that had never supplied marchers before supplied large numbers of them now. I noticed a small coterie of Young Republicans wearing Robertson, Kemp, and Dole buttons, and distinguished from the rest of us by the vulgarity of their chants, as if they were cheerleaders at a football game. The rest of us were singing, mostly, or walking quietly; it wasn't a raucous crowd. And, so far as presidential politics went, it was mostly buttonless; I saw a few people who proclaimed their support for Paul Simon. Four Republican candidates attended: Bush, Kemp, Dole, and Haig; and one Democrat, Al Gore. A first for me: I had never marched with would-be presidents. Nor did I really march with them this time, but with all the others. It is still true that only when I go to Washington to demonstrate do I feel at home there.

I HAD ALSO never marched with Republicans before (or not listened to someone as unsympathetic as George Bush). But it was always true in the past that I found myself walking alongside people with whom I had deep political disagreements. One can't be, shouldn't be, a purist about a political act that involves hundreds of thousands of men and women. When I write something by myself, sitting alone in my study, I have a chance to say exactly what I mean; everything else in political life is a necessary compromise. Expressions of solidarity are always compromises, because the men and women for whom we declare ourselves are caught up in intense internal conflicts, about which we don't declare ourselves. Were they set free, I would find political friends and enemies among Russian Jews. Unfree, they are all friends.

On television the night before the march, I heard Elie Wiesel proclaim that peace and freedom are indivisible. Maybe they are, in some ultimate sense. But among *my* marchers there was no one ready to postpone signing a treaty on nuclear arms until Russian Jews were set free (or until Russian troops withdrew from Afghanistan, or Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were granted autonomy). In fact, we marched in recognition of divisibility, supporting the soon-to-be signed treaty, while insisting at the

same time that there were other issues that had to be addressed. Politics is many simultaneous battles, not one Big Battle. Once again, a familiar theme: on all my previous marches, there were people who insisted on indivisibility, who argued that all political issues hang together and are explained by a single Doctrine, that there is only one enemy, only one victory or defeat. It is an argument that makes the enemy seem far stronger than he is, and always invites defeat. In the old days, this was mostly an argument of the far left; today, it is mostly an argument of the far right. Either way, it is a bad argument. Friends and enemies come in confusing multitudes; we struggle with them and against them and take what victories we can. That was the mood of these marchers, my fellow marchers, last Sunday: we were a motley crowd, not bound together by Doctrine, thank heaven, but only by shared feelings and hopes.

MICHAEL WALZER

THE  PRESS

GLASNOST VS. GLASNOST

THE RECENT CAREER of the word "glasnost" has been interesting and convoluted. "Our very first demonstration in Pushkin Square in 1965 had one single slogan: 'glasnost,'" says Soviet exile and human rights activist Vladimir Bukovsky, "and now it is the general secretary of the Communist Party pinning it to his mast." Today it is indeed Gorbachev's word, and there is much debate about what he means by it. It can mean anything from publicity to real openness. No one knows for sure because glasnost has a moving definition. The Yeltsin affair announces that glasnost will mean whatever Gorbachev decides it should mean. Since the limits of glasnost are defined not by rule or logic, but by political exigency, the great fear is that you never know if you are trespassing the limits. Yeltsin fell because he went too far. What is too far? Where Yeltsin went. As Natan Sharansky says, "Glasnost is not a form of freedom. It's just a new set of instructions on what is and isn't permitted."

Glasnost, like everything else of value in the Soviet Union, belongs to the Party. But there is a struggle for proprietary rights. Dissident intellectuals fighting to reclaim the word have established the first unofficial publication in the Soviet Union in 70 years and called it *Glasnost*. The title is both ironic and politically astute, since it will be harder to crack down on a journal whose name announces the intention of fulfilling the promise of Gorbachev's most cherished slogan.

Glasnost, put together by ex-political prisoners, is edited by Sergei Grigoryants, who displays political wisdom born of ten years in and out of the Gulag. The journal portrays itself not as anti-government and certainly not

anti-Gorbachev, but as enacting the official policy of glasnost by bringing into the open that which had been closed. It claims to be a "complement," not a challenge, to the official media. It merely fills in the gaps.

Some gaps. It has denounced the continuing destruction of the Stalin archives, which will make future historiography and political redress impossible. It has published a petition for Armenian self-determination, another for the release of political prisoners in Georgia, and another for the right to emigrate. It acts as a community bulletin board for the unofficial "social clubs" that have sprung up in the wake of Gorbachev's glasnost. And it not only reproduces the demands of Crimean Tartars to return to their homeland, from which they were forcibly evicted by Stalin in 1944. It criticizes the coverage in the official press of the Tartar demonstrations. In short, *Glasnost* is an astonishing compilation of protest and criticism on just about every taboo subject in the Soviet lexicon.

The existence of *Glasnost* is a kind of political miracle, and in police states miracles are generally outlawed. In fact, the official status of *Glasnost* is ambiguous. Grigoryants's request for permission to publish *Glasnost* was sent to the Politburo, which in turn relayed it to a deputy in the Agitation and Propaganda sector, who in turn passed it on to a press control official. So far, no ruling. It is neither legal nor illegal. Its fate, it seems, has yet to be decided.

Grigoryants points out that of the 8,500 newspapers and 1,500 journals in the country, his is the only one that is not published by the state or some public (i.e., state-controlled) organization. He has had fun with the uniqueness of his status. He was told by the acting district prosecutor that he had to submit two copies of his publication to the chief censoring agency. But since the publication of *Glasnost* is not authorized, no censor is assigned to it. "As far as I know," writes Grigoryants, "the censors do not work on a *pro bono* basis." It is not clear how long the authorities will tolerate his humor or the uses to which he puts loopholes in the state's thought-control apparatus.

MY PROGRAM, says Grigoryants, is more democracy through more information. But democracy is not on Gorbachev's agenda. What then is the role of a free press? And how long will the authorities tolerate its exercise? Grigoryants's defiance seems to have a nervous quality about it, as if he and his cohorts know that a crackdown is coming but cannot help themselves—they feel impelled to do what they are doing for as long as they can do it, whatever the consequences.

When Thermidor comes the consequences will be considerable. And Thermidor may not be that far away. On October 2 the KGB ransacked the magazine's offices, confiscated copies of the latest edition, and detained two associate editors. Grigoryants himself was arrested (and released) at a human rights demonstration on October 30. Now come the attacks in the official press. The Communist Party's Moscow evening newspaper accused *Glasnost* of being "immoral and unnecessary." Immoral for waving "old anti-Soviet banners," an ominous charge that lays the

groundwork for future prosecution. And unnecessary because—and this gives away the game on the question of what Gorbachev's glasnost really means—"if the process [of glasnost] continues and goes on in depth, what need is there for an unofficial press? There will be no need for any other glasnost. There will be just one—one honest, one broad, and one single glasnost."

The battle is unequal. Not only can the full police power of the Soviet state be arrayed against Grigoryants, but the powerful propaganda organs are ready as well. This last attack published in the Moscow daily reached a circulation of 600,000. *Glasnost* is able to put out all of 1,500 copies. (Similarly, the attacks on Yeltsin reached every Soviet citizen. The Yeltsin speech, which ostensibly provoked the attacks, has yet to be published.)

In fact, *Glasnost* is getting far more circulation in the West, where it is least needed. Translations are being published in Paris and New York and are soon to appear in Stockholm and Oslo. The New York edition (another exceptional cause supported by the much maligned National Endowment for Democracy) offers American readers more than twice as many copies as are available in Moscow. Thus Grigoryants's *Glasnost*, like Gorbachev's, is largely oriented for Western consumption. Not that this is Grigoryants's intention. He seeks Western publicity because it is about the only insurance for *Glasnost*'s continuance and against his own imprisonment.

The Yeltsin affair, complete with Central Committee unanimity and miscreant's public confession, demonstrates that Gorbachev's idea of glasnost is indeed unitary, with definitions and limits determined at the top. Grigoryants is advancing a contrary view. His insistence on keeping *Glasnost* independent makes it a test case for a conception of glasnost that implies plurality. That puts the fate of *Glasnost* in doubt. It is a fate worth watching for two reasons. For what it will tell us about Gorbachev: it will show whether Gorbachev's glasnost allows space for anything other than state-sanctioned shows of independence. And for its own sake: the fate of *Glasnost* will determine the fate of its creators. Grigoryants and his associates deserve the protective attention of those of us who enjoy true glasnost as a birthright and not as a reward for courage.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Raisa meets Russia.

GORBO'S OTHER WOMAN

THE MOST PIQUANT, puzzling, and unrehearsed moment in the Brokaw-Gorbachev show came when the "conversation" turned to the subject of discussing politics with Raisa. All of a sudden, Gorbachev's voluminous didacticism, with its endless enumerations and de-

tours, was replaced by a snappy three-word reply: "We discuss everything." When Brokaw inquired further, asking whether "everything" included the "affairs at the highest level," Gorbachev, a man never at a loss for words, repeated himself, and did so with some irritation.

The significance of Brokaw's query, which any American president would have welcomed as a respite from the pressure of a media interview, became magnified the following day when Soviet television axed both Brokaw's follow-up question and the supreme leader's reply.

GORBACHEV'S DISCOMFORT with the question comes from a system of popular beliefs about the nature of government authority as well as a ceremonial language of state in which supreme power requests and receives the assent of the governed. As far as the popular imagination is concerned, the office of the head of state in Russia, whether the czar or the Party chief, is charismatic in character. Paradoxically, while the charismatic appeal of Russia's last czars was progressively on the wane during the last century of the old regime, dissipating entirely in the days before the abdication of Nicholas II, the modern Soviet state relies on and ceaselessly fosters the charismatic authority of its leaders. Then, as now, the quasi-religious aura of the head of state was supported by an elaborate ritual and myth with roots going back to imperial Byzantine customs. According to this tradition (its echoes are discernible today in the debates on the ordination of women in the Catholic Church), the monarch symbolized the bridegroom of the country he ruled. An elaborate marriage ritual integrates the mundane necessity of an orderly succession into the master conjugal myth, emphasizing the queen's sole function: to produce a legitimate heir. A monarch in this tradition has two bodies: one symbolic, for public display, and the other actual, to which Raisa belongs, which is to remain hidden from view, of no concern to the governed.

The ostensible asceticism of the Russian revolutionaries, who sacrificed their personal lives for the sake of their lofty mission, was assiduously cultivated and ultimately codified by the Bolshevik Party. After the revolution, this style of leadership soon developed its own mythology in which the leader had to display an undivided devotion to affairs of state—his true bride. The indeterminacy of tenure, not unlike that of a monarch, further reinforces the conjugal mythology of state. As a result, the leader's lawful wife (and all Soviet leaders were married men) had to settle for the status of "the other woman," invisible in public and unnamed. Only in death, whether her husband's or her own, could her existence be acknowledged in the same ritual terms afforded to her spouse.

Apparently neither Raisa Gorbachev nor her husband is at home with this archaic scheme. Just as apparently, a majority of Russians are unwilling to see her as anything but that and are understandably piqued at the sight of the supreme leader parading *her* in public. One solution would be to develop a state ceremony that would ac-

knowledge her ritually as a queen of sorts. Both Gorbachev and his country are too modern for that. The other would be to abandon the ascetic tradition of the early Bolsheviks that makes it impossible to have a First Lady. Much of the Party's claim to legitimacy rests on the lore of self-sacrifice in the people's cause, and Gorbachev is in no position to dispense with an effective source of authority. It would seem, then, that here too, as in so many other areas of Soviet life, the old has to be reconciled with the recent, and both with the new. The future spells improvisation and heavy going.

GREGORY FREIDIN

Gregory Freidin is associate professor of Slavic languages and literature at Stanford University.

A cure worse than the disease.

AGAINST AUSTERITY

PETER G. PETERSON and friends have hurled themselves once more into the breach, warning this time in two-page newspaper ads that America must restrain public spending and balance the federal budget before it is too late. The signers of this latest incarnation of Peterson's "Bipartisan" budget plan include mostly Republican corporate chief executives and investment bankers, but with just enough well-heeled Democrats, nominal and real (Lloyd Cutler, George Ball, Felix Rohatyn, Bob Strauss, Cyrus Vance, Robert McNamara, et al.), to give the bipartisan label plausibility. Unlike the first Peterson Budget Appeal, calling for spending cuts in the pit of the 1982-83 recession, this one comes after five years of accumulated deficits. The earlier warnings now seem prophetic; the remedy seems inevitable, and overdue.

Peterson's fundamental economic contention, spelled out in greater detail in a recent *Atlantic* cover article and widely endorsed by America's financial establishment, is that the nation has been living beyond its collective means, that public spending must be cut and taxes increased in order to reduce the federal deficit, and that private savings must rise sharply to finance more productive investment, lest a worse day of reckoning come later on. A similar case has been made in editorials and columns in this journal and elsewhere. A recent cover piece in *Business Week*, headed "Wake Up, America!" (illustrated by a man tightening his belt), warned that "living standards will almost surely decline."

Belt-tightening, seemingly, has the universal support of prudent people everywhere. As the Peterson ad declares, "We have joined together to urge our fellow Americans and this Nation's leaders to rise above politics as usual, to set aside differences—of party, region, ideology, and even

immediate self-interest—in order to resolve our worsening economic problems before it is too late.” Specifically, urges the ad, “spending cuts of all kinds should be top priority.” Defense spending should be “restrained” while “cuts must be made in non-defense programs, especially all the other entitlement, transfer, and subsidy programs that are not means-tested.”

Some of this is reasonable. But most of it represents one possible strategy among many, one that is covertly and intensely partisan, embracing a particular philosophy. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of equal sacrifice, Peterson’s program has heavy costs both for equity and growth. Although his brand of traditional, sound money conservatism presents itself as the opposite of Reagan’s giddy supply-side brand, the subtext turns out to be the same: civilian government, once again, must unfortunately be sacrificed. Public outlays that have been cut for seven years in the name of supply-side gods must now be hacked some more to reassure Wall Street.

The Peterson program submerges and obscures distributional issues that simply cannot “rise above politics” because the question of whose belt should be tightened—or enlarged—is inherently political. Whenever selfless millionaires declare that “we” must tighten our belts for the greater public good, the appropriate response is Tonto’s “What you mean ‘we,’ Investment Banker?”

THE FIRST debatable question is how much the deficit ought to be cut. The Gramm-Rudman bill holds that the deficit must be cut by \$23 billion in 1988, and to zero by 1993. Peterson thinks it needs to be cut even faster than that, “\$30-40 billion in the first year . . . so that the budget can move towards balance by 1992.” But that would be absurd policy. State and local budgets run net surpluses of about 1.5 percent of GNP. So a federal deficit of 1.5 percent of GNP equals a net public fiscal stimulus of zero. A very good case can be made for a federal deficit of about two percent of GNP, or about \$100 billion by the early 1990s. At normal growth rates, the government can run a two percent of GNP deficit (which is mildly tonic for expansion) and the economy grows faster than the debt, allowing the debt to shrink steadily as a fraction of GNP.

Some historical perspective is in order here. America came out of World War II with a federal debt of \$271 billion, or 120 percent of GNP. The debt today of some \$2.4 trillion is about 55 percent of GNP. Household savings rates soared during World War II, but those savings were largely consumed by government borrowing, leaving the nation with a very low net savings rate. The household assets existed only as accounting claims against the Treasury. Yet the debt was rolled over after the war, with the cooperation of the Fed, and it financed a consumer boom. The worst possible policy for retiring the World War II debt would have been an austerity program. The government typically ran moderate deficits between 1946 and 1980; yet by 1970, thanks to a growing economy, the debt had dropped to less than 30 percent of GNP, where it stayed until 1982.

The second debatable issue is how to reach an appropriate deficit. Peterson proposes to cut civilian spending first, to “restrain” defense spending, and to raise taxes only as a last resort. But this is a distributively perverse response to the fiscal mess left by Reaganomics. During the Reagan years, the bottom half of the income distribution has lost a substantial share of total national income, due to shifts in relative tax burdens, the cut in social spending, the reduced wages at the bottom of the labor market, as well as demographic changes. On average, the bottom one-fifth of the income distribution lost one dollar of every six dollars in earnings that it had in 1981.

Statistically, the top fifth increased its share of total income by about eight percent, but that understates the story. The big distributive shift in the 1980s has been a vastly greater concentration of wealth. Between 1981 and 1987, the stock market almost quadrupled in value. Even after Black Monday, and even adjusting for inflation, the Dow Jones has more than doubled in real value since 1981. The other big winner during the past decade has been real estate, which also has more than doubled in real value. Financial assets are concentrated among the very wealthy to an astonishing degree. The top ten percent own fully 90 percent of the value of stocks, 88 percent of bonds, and 95.1 percent of the value of trusts. In short, the massive run-up in wealth values during the Reagan presidency benefitted a tiny fraction of the population. These are the people who had the party during the 1980s, and these are the ones who should pay the bill.

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There is also a strong distributive and partisan case that domestic public spending ought to be increased, not reduced further. Not counting Social Security, federal social spending has been cut by about \$40 billion during the Reagan years. Since 1986, when the Democrats took back control of the Senate, several long-deferred issues have been nonetheless upstaged by the politics of deficit reduction. Instead of making more cuts, public spending ought to be restored. Those public outlays might be financed by defense cuts, or by further tax increases, say, on private consumption. But all of this is a matter of political choice and not technical economic imperative. Please note also that most of these are precisely not programs “limited to the poor,” but programs that serve America as a society. Universal health insurance, or public education, or the rebuilding of highways, by definition, cannot be limited to the poor. (There are, at the same time, some cuts that might be made in entitlement

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Some portions of the Peterson view are valid, yet a variety of responses are possible, with markedly different distributive implications. Peterson and Company are right that America consumes too much, saves too little, and borrows too much from abroad. A debt equal to 55 percent of GNP is not by itself a problem. But a net foreign debt that is increasing by \$150 billion to \$200 billion yearly is a problem indeed. There is obviously a need to make American products more marketable, to demand that our trading partners treat our goods fairly, and to raise domestic savings rates sufficiently to finance both the accumulated debt and the need for new investment. Cutting the public deficit, which is a drain on private savings, is one way to increase net savings. A value-added tax, made progressive by generous tax credits for the consumption of basic necessities, would also help.

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In sum: America as an economy needs to reduce both its federal deficit and its dependence on foreign borrowing. But it also needs to rebuild its public economy as well as its private one, and it needs to do so on the basis of high growth, and not on the basics of some puritanical concept

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U.S. aid, Zia's policy is not about to change, and Zia is still more clever and underhanded by half than any other politician in Pakistan. Moreover, Benazir Bhutto, his chief domestic opponent, has come around to realizing that Pakistan really has no choice but to support the *mujahideen*, if only to keep U.S. aid flowing and to keep the Soviet bear from eventually roaming down the Khyber Pass into Peshawar. What goes unsaid is that even if it wanted to, Pakistan has no means of controlling over three million armed and angry Afghan refugees—fierce Pathan tribesmen who, in the words of one military analyst, could “rip through Pakistan’s Punjabi army like a knife through butter.”

THE KREMLIN, which has a formidable intelligence network in Pakistan, knows all this. That’s why the KGB’s terrorist campaign is as much a sign of desperation as cold-bloodedness. The Soviets reached a dead end in Afghanistan some time ago. But only in recent months did they begin a free-fall through the trapdoor. The eighth anniversary of their December 27, 1979, invasion has to be their darkest yet.

Since late 1986 the *mujahideen* have shot down several hundred Soviet planes with the shoulder-fired Stingers. This year the Soviets stopped flying in the daytime in most parts of Afghanistan, except at high altitudes, where bombing accuracy is severely diminished. With the skies clear, the resistance is now free to move around in daylight. Because the British-made Blowpipes are no longer needed as anti-aircraft missiles, the *mujahideen* have turned them into deadly accurate anti-tank weapons. The guerrillas have also started to receive 122mm ground-to-ground missiles from China. Controlling only the main cities and roads, Russian and Afghan government forces are prisoners in their own garrisons. The only thing between them and the *mujahideen* are mine fields, and the Reagan administration is expected soon to ship mine-clearing equipment to the resistance. In the spring of 1987 Moscow admitted for the first time publicly that the *mujahideen* have carried out raids across the Oxus River into the Soviet Union itself. Just recently, President Najib’s brother defected to the *mujahideen*, and bombs went off in Kabul during a speech given by the president to the National Assembly. But the worst news for the Red Army is that the seven main resistance forces are more united than ever and, as a result, better coordinating their activities in the field.

The costs of the occupation will never be offset by the natural gas that the Soviets are extracting from the Kunduz fields in northern Afghanistan. Nor is there any long-range hope of integrating Afghanistan into the Soviet market. In Russia 80 percent of all goods move by rail, and in Afghanistan, with its mountainous terrain, there are no railroads.

The main reason now for the Soviets to bunker in and slug it out with the *mujahideen* is Iran and the Gulf. Witness the bases, ammunition stores, and listening posts built in the Farah and Helmand regions of southwest Afghanistan, just 400 miles and 30 minutes by fighter jet from the Strait of Hormuz.

At the very least, from Moscow’s point of view, some of these installations as well as a friendly government in Kabul must remain if Mikhail Gorbachev is to withdraw his troops. Searching for a way out, the Soviets let their Afghan puppet ruler, President Najib, sucker them into trying “national reconciliation,” which has proved a failure. It is costing the Kremlin a bundle to air freight prefabricated houses into places like Kandahar, which the Russians have only recently destroyed, in order to buy legitimacy for President Najib. Like the bombings in Pakistan, it isn’t working. The *mujahideen* have surrounded Kandahar and are attacking it at night.

THE PROBLEM for Gorbachev is that there is simply no middle ground. Nothing better illustrates this than the U.N.-sponsored peace talks. Reports of progress in the negotiations are exaggerated. Having been fooled once too often by Communist power-sharing deals in Laos and in Eastern Europe after World War II, nobody is impressed by President Najib’s offer of non-vital ministerial posts for the resistance if it stops fighting. Even if Pakistan and the United States were to allow Moscow a face-saving compromise, the Afghan resistance is not theirs to deliver. Our leverage is minimal: the *mujahideen* are not the *contras* or the South Vietnamese. They held their own over the Red Army for six years before substantial American aid ever arrived. And their hatred of the Soviets is—in its own way—no less fanatical than the hatred of the Iranians toward us. The real political power in the resistance rests with the *mujahideen* commanders inside Afghanistan who administer vast chunks of territory, not with the seven parties who are involved in the talks. It is the *mujahideen*, the least prone of any to compromise, who are capable of getting Gorbachev off the hook. “Unless Gorbachev is prepared to withdraw without his friends in control, he is stuck. There is no other way out,” said Hedayat Arsala, a former Afghan World Bank official and relative of Abdul Haq, the *mujahideen* commander of Kabul province.

With close to 1.5 million dead, more than ten times as many Muslims have been killed in Afghanistan as in Lebanon since 1975. The Israelis would have to repeat their 1982 invasion of Beirut 75 times over before equaling the Kremlin’s record of Afghan carnage. Nevertheless, Afghanistan, like the Gulf war a few years ago, is an issue that is a sleeper. Gorbachev, despite calling the war a “bleeding wound,” has done little to change the way that the war is being prosecuted, except to carry the killing of civilians over into Pakistan. And due to the ever-improving fighting performance of the *mujahideen*, whatever options he has are closing. While he basks in the glory of *glasnost*, lurking in Central Asia are Afghan guerrillas ready to plunge a knife in his back.

ROBERT D. KAPLAN

Robert D. Kaplan, an Athens-based journalist, recently returned from six weeks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He has just completed a book on the Ethiopian famine.

And the coalition against it.

SAFE NUCLEAR POWER

BY LAWRENCE M. LIDSKY

NUCLEAR POWER is on its way out in the United States. The current technology has failed in the U.S. marketplace, and it will not be revived. Advocates of nuclear power will, for a while yet, be able to point to nuclear power's ever-increasing share of electricity production. And, to be sure, a few more nuclear power plants will begin operating each year for several more years. Such controversial plants as Seabrook and Shoreham may even come on line. But the pipeline is nearly empty; all the plants presently under construction were ordered before 1974, and no utility has plans to order another for as far into the future as it can see. In a few years the oldest nuclear plants will begin to be retired, either because their licenses have expired or because they will simply become too expensive to maintain. As the stream of new nuclear plants dies away and the rate of retirement increases, nuclear power will gradually play a less important role in the nation's economy, and in 25 or 30 years it will be completely negligible.

This is unfortunate, because we know enough now to build a new generation of nuclear reactors that could save billions of dollars and tens of thousands of lives. These reactors would not strain the public's shaken faith in scientific integrity and industrial competence because their safety could be publicly demonstrated by actual test. Neither would they strain the utility industry's ability to raise funds for multibillion-dollar units. Despite this, the potential of a radically different sort of nuclear power plant is rarely mentioned in the public debate over nuclear power. It is as if the participants in the AIDS debate had agreed not to mention the possibility of a cure.

It is easy to see why the opponents of nuclear power are perfectly happy to leave a troublesome concept such as a demonstrably better reactor out of the discussion. The surprise is that the proponents of nuclear power are willing to leave it out also. Those who speak for the nuclear industry are simply not interested in the potential of radically new reactors. The pessimists among them look at the shambles of the failed U.S. nuclear industry and say that there is no hope, no reactor could possibly get us out of this mess. The few optimists and the true believers out there look upon the highly successful French and Japanese nuclear programs and say that there is no problem: the technology is fine, it is only the public that has failed. But there aren't enough of them to sway the debate.

It is easy to argue that we would actually be better

off without nuclear power because the electric power generated by many nuclear plants now coming on line is far more expensive than electrical power produced by burning coal or natural gas. And there are psychic and social costs that must be charged against nuclear power. It is harder to argue the costs of not having nuclear power because these costs are widely and almost invisibly diffused throughout society. In fact, the cost of not making nuclear power work is being paid now in human lives. In a few decades, the cost will also be paid in international competitiveness.

Every year approximately 100 people die in coal-mining accidents and more than 500 die in railroad and other accidents associated with the transport of coal. These deaths and serious injuries usually come in ones and twos, are noted briefly in local newspapers, and are never summed up in the public imagination. Nor are the ravages of air pollution. The effects of acid rain on our environment have become apparent, but there is also the less obvious though statistically very real effect of air pollution in shortening people's lives. Because the pollution contributes to, but does not directly cause, what statisticians call "premature deaths," it is difficult to quantify its human costs precisely. It is clear, however, that the toll, primarily upon the sick and the old, amounts to some tens of thousands of lives every year—invisible, unindictable, but nevertheless very real. These costs are ignored in the studies that claim to show how much money or how many lives we will save by shutting down all our nuclear plants.

The toll that burning fossil fuels exacts in lives and money is not an inevitable price we must pay for an advanced society, for despite all the recent difficulties, many of the glittering promises of the first advocates of the nuclear age can come true. Nuclear power really does have the potential to be one of the least environmentally damaging, most economical sources of power available. The current problems are inherent not in nuclear power, but in the particular machinery we have devised to exploit it, and in the astonishingly harebrained schemes we have evolved to dispose of its unavoidable waste. There are now working prototypes of demonstrably safer reactors that are much better suited to the capabilities and limitations of their human operators. The difference between these advanced reactors and the reactors now used to generate power is qualitative and easily grasped. These new reactors also turn out to be substantially cheaper and more reliable than existing reactors.

When nuclear power was first developed, there were dozens of different technologies available for its exploita-

tion: different forms of fission fuel, different coolants, different physical arrangements and sizes, etc. Nuclear power's early history was similar to the early days of self-powered transport, with steam, diesel, and gasoline vehicles of various bizarre shapes all vying for supremacy. Much as the gasoline-powered, four-wheeled automobile emerged from the pack, so did the light water reactor (LWR). The light water reactor, so called to distinguish it from "heavy water" reactors, now is by far the dominant reactor type across the world.

THE LWR IS inherently an exceedingly complex, unforgiving device. It was known that this was the case even while the LWR was driving rival designs from the scene; the dominance of the LWR is due at least as much to politics as it is to technology. When it became undeniable in the early 1950s that nuclear power would spread around the globe, it was clearly in the national interest for U.S. technology to become the dominant technology. The LWR was already highly developed in the United States because of its suitability for submarine propulsion and its important role in a plutonium-based economy. Hothouse development using military funds gave the LWR a jump on the rest of the pack, and so it was the first reactor type able to go from laboratory scale to sizes of industrial interest. The LWR was available in 1953 when the Atoms for Peace program was instituted and became "the U.S. reactor." The Atomic Energy Commission diverted all the available development money to light water while other reactor concepts withered and died for lack of support. As a result of the LWR's victory, GE and Westinghouse dominated the world's nuclear industry much as Boeing came to dominate the world's aircraft industry. Initial government support provided an almost insurmountable head start. Ironically, because of the demands the LWR places upon its builders and operators, it turned out to be much better suited to the institutional structures of countries such as France and Japan than it did to that of the United States. In those countries, the manufacturers, utilities, and regulators are closely linked and the opportunities for the public to get involved limited. The LWR now does much better in exile than it does in its homeland, and foreign manufacturers have taken a clear lead in the design and sales of advanced LWRs.

The design of a nuclear reactor requires three basic choices: the fuel, which undergoes the chain reaction; the moderator, which surrounds the fuel and facilitates the chain reaction; and the coolant, which carries the heat generated in the chain reaction off to do useful work. All the problems of the LWR stem from the particular choices that were made.

The fuel used in LWRs embodies uranium in the form of a ceramic material quite similar in properties to the ovenware used for cooking. Like ovenware, the ceramic fuel of the LWR is capable of withstanding extremely high temperatures, but it is very hard and very brittle. Like ovenware, it will crack if it is heated too quickly or cooled too suddenly. Most important, it is, again like ovenware, a very poor conductor of heat. This property of most ceramics accounts, for

example, for the fact that frying pans are usually not made of ceramics, whereas baking dishes—which need respond only slowly—can be and usually are made of such materials.

The moderator in the LWR is common water, the same water we drink and swim in. The coolant used in the LWR is also common water. In all reactors now used for electricity generation, the final stage in the process is the turning of water into steam to spin the huge turbines that actually turn the generators. In the designs known as boiling water reactors (BWRs), the steam is generated inside the reactor itself. In the devices known as pressurized water reactors (PWRs), the reactor cooling water is transferred to huge external steam generators where additional water is boiled to make the steam that drives the turbines. Both the BWR and the PWR are important variants of the LWR, but their differences, so crucial to the battle between GE and Westinghouse, are not greatly consequential in the broader context. From the perspective of cost and public safety, all LWRs are pretty much the same.

The choice of ceramic fuel and water coolant determines the overall attributes of the whole nuclear plant. This choice also determines, although in a less obvious fashion, the type of society required to operate those nuclear plants safely and economically. The reason for this is that the ceramic-fueled, water-cooled plant has almost no margin for a particular sort of failure—the loss-of-coolant accident. This particular failure is so much the focus of attention in nuclear safety analyses that it is referred to by its acronym, LOCA.

The fuel in a ceramic-fuel reactor must be extraordinarily hot to force the heat through the ceramic. The ceramic is so brittle that it must be encased in a metal tube to keep it from falling apart as the reactor heats and cools. The difficulty ensues because the required fuel temperatures are far greater than the temperature necessary to melt the metal tube. This is not a problem in normal operation because the tube is cooled with water.

However, water can boil away, or flow away through a broken pipe. If it does, the now uncooled fuel will heat its metal container to the melting point in less than a minute. This can start a chain of circumstances, the least severe of which is radioactive contamination of the remaining cooling water and the most severe of which includes meltdown, with consequences that may or may not be contained within the power plant itself. Three Mile Island showed the results of a contained meltdown; Chernobyl demonstrated the reasons for the fear of an uncontained meltdown.

THE ONLY WAY to ensure against meltdown of LWR fuel is to provide an absolute guarantee of the presence of cooling water. This guarantee must be valid in the event of pump failure, or pipe breakage, or operator error, or any combination, however unlikely, of any of these. Even in the worst-case scenario—an earthquake where electrical power cannot be brought in from the outside to operate the pumps and valves—the plant must be able to protect itself.

Designers of the LWR attempt to reduce the risk of a LOCA by using multiple redundant pipes, pumps, valves, and con-

trol systems arrayed so that every item has at least one backup and so that particularly critical items have multiple levels of backup. Nuclear power plants even have as many as three standby diesel generating plants that can kick in during an emergency. This makes the probability of failure even smaller, but for some, the probability can never be small enough. If the probability of a multiple failure is deemed too high, then yet another safety system can be added as backup. It must also be argued that the backups are truly independent and that there is no "common mode" failure that could affect them all at once, say the starter batteries on the diesel generators all failing simultaneously. The technique of multiple, redundant backup systems is known as "defense-in-depth" and is the keystone of nuclear reactor safety regulation. It is easy to see that systems that rely on defense-in-depth can become extremely complicated. The problem is that the guarantee can never be absolute; it must be based on reducing probability to "negligible" levels.

THE CONCEPT OF defense-in-depth is not unique to the nuclear industry. The passenger aircraft in commercial service all rely on just this system. Every two-engine airliner can take off using just one, should the other fail at a critical moment. Every three-engine commercial aircraft can continue its flight using just one, should two engines inexplicably fail at the same time. The aircraft's automatic control system has a manual system to back it up, and an additional mechanical system, should that one fail.

Such systems can be made to work if they are well designed and if sufficient care is given to their maintenance. But it is sometimes difficult to test systems that must work on infrequent demand. It is sometimes impossible to simulate the condition under which the backup system will be called upon. And, as recent evidence in the airline industry has shown, it is possible to disable backup systems "temporarily" if their presence becomes annoying.

Defense-in-depth has two important difficulties when it is applied to nuclear reactors. The first is that the consequences of a nuclear accident are potentially so much greater than those of an airplane accident. The required level of safety is much higher and the safety system is therefore far more complex. The components needed to supply the additional levels of safety make the power plant harder to operate and maintain, and harder to analyze. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been expended in the task of trying to calculate the probability of failure of the existing nuclear power plants, yet there is little agreement. The huge investment in complex safety systems also explains the high cost, long construction time, and high operational costs of the nation's current nuclear power plants.

The second difficulty with defense-in-depth is that its efficacy in complex situations cannot be demonstrated experimentally. The only way to prove defense-in-depth works is to disable intentionally major safety items and then test the system. It is relatively simple, for example, in certifying an aircraft to turn off one or more engines while in flight to demonstrate that the airplane can be controlled and the engines restarted. It is not feasible, however, to

melt the core of a nuclear reactor to show that the containment will hold. The barely conceivable becomes impossible when it is realized that dozens of different accident sequences must be simulated for each reactor, depending on which safety systems or combinations have failed. Such testing is prohibitively dangerous and expensive. Defense-in-depth for the current generation of nuclear plants can be made plausible but can never be conclusively proven.

Because of their basic design and their consequent reliance on defense-in-depth, the LWRs used by U.S. utilities are inherently large and complex. The U.S. power generating system—a mix of private, public, and federally owned power generating facilities—is complex, widely variable in capability, experience, and dedication. Individual elements of the system are subject to a myriad of differing institutional, regulatory, and financial pressures. We are trying to mesh a complex technology with a complex economic and political structure; it should be no surprise that the level of success is quite low.

It is often claimed by members of the "nuclear community" that this mismatch of technology and social structure could be resolved if only our institutions and, in particular, our regulatory structures were streamlined and simplified. History, however, shows us the futility of such arguments: the American public wants a pluralistic system, with maximum public participation, with clear division of powers, and with multiple levels of safeguards and appeals. Unless there is clear consensus, such a system can be slow, contentious, frustrating, and inefficient. Nonetheless, except for the most immediate emergencies, it is the preferred mode of operation. It is correctly perceived that the "need to keep the nuclear option open" is not such an emergency issue. As a consequence, attempts to mold U.S. political structures to match a complex technology have little chance of success. This argument is not universal; other countries have social structures better suited to the demands of nuclear technology. The coal and gas resources of the United States afford us the luxury of resisting.

REACTORS CAN BE built today that are able to survive the failure of any single component or any combination of components without fear, indeed without even the possibility, of fuel damage. Without fuel damage, there can be no release of radiation. These reactors don't rely on defense-in-depth. They also possess another essential attribute: the reactor can survive component failures without serious damage to the internal structures of the reactor itself. The elimination of public hazard is essential if the public is ever again to accept nuclear power. Freedom from financial risk is necessary if the utilities are ever again to include nuclear power in their plans.

We have known for a long time how to build such reactors—a prototype has been operating since 1967. It is only recently, in light of our experience with LWRs, that we realize how badly they are needed. The key to the new reactors is a radically different fuel form that is capable of withstanding very high temperatures. The reactors are small to ensure that it is physically impossible for such

temperatures ever to be achieved. Such reactors are termed "inherently safe." They are sometimes labeled "passively safe" because no action whatever need be taken to mitigate the effects of equipment failure. Whatever the name, these new reactors eliminate the need for the defense-in-depth strategy. They are designed so that the power plant could suffer the simultaneous failure of all its control and cooling systems without any danger to the public living near the power plant. According to the most stringent rules now in place, there would not even be a requirement to mount warning sirens on the plant.

WHY IN THE world are inherently safe reactors not in common use? Until recently, existing reactors were deemed to be "safe enough," and thus there was no need to consider introducing safer reactors. To the beleaguered industry, a public assertion that there was anything at all to be gained from increased safety was equivalent to an explicit statement that existing reactors were not safe enough. As a result, the coalition formed by the Energy Department, nuclear plant builders, and utilities that had invested so much money and prestige in the LWR went further than merely ignoring the potential of inherently safe reactors. They actually impeded the development of such reactors.

The second reason is that such reactors must be substantially smaller than the 3,000 megawatt behemoths now in general use. The maximum size consistent with inherent safety is about one-tenth the size of today's nuclear plants. It was commonly thought that the bigger reactors would be more economical because economies of scale would spread the fixed costs of safety and support systems over more units of electricity generation. Such economies of scale have not been demonstrated. In any event, it has slowly dawned that repetitive construction of identical reactor modules in centralized factories might have compensating advantages. The learning curve of such serial production has certainly been demonstrated in our airplane factories and the Japanese shipyards.

The smaller, inherently safe reactors also deliver electricity more cheaply than the alternatives. The current generation of reactors now coming on line, such as Shoreham and Seabrook, cost twice as much as the smaller reactors because of the money that goes to installing and maintaining their complex safety systems. Detailed cost estimates show that inherently safe plants can produce electricity at less than one-half the cost of current reactors. In addition, the predicted cost of an inherently safe plant is lower than that of its main competitor for next generation power, the modern coal-fired plant.

Because an inherently safe reactor will survive a worst-case accident without damage, it could be licensed much as aircraft are, by a combination of analysis and proof testing. That is, unlike an LWR, you could actually try out each reactor and prove it won't melt down. Such license-by-test is absolutely essential if the American public is ever again to accept nuclear power.

The license-by-test process responds to the request for

standardization made by both proponents and opponents of nuclear power. Several congressional committees have made standardization a keystone of regulatory reform, but there is, of course, little agreement as to whose design will become the standard. License-by-test will lead to standardization as a byproduct. Reactor vendors will, for reasons of cost, settle on a few basic designs because of the expense of preparing a prototype for testing. The analogy to the aircraft industry is apt in this case also; a relative handful of different models is adequate to fit a wide variety of missions. The regulatory agencies will not be "reformed," but their tasks will be made a great deal simpler. Standardization will result from market forces, not regulation.

WE THOUGHT we had been having a great national debate over nuclear power. Instead, we have merely been discussing the acceptability of the LWR. But the LWR is no more a surrogate for the potential of nuclear power than the *Hindenburg* was for the potential of air transportation.

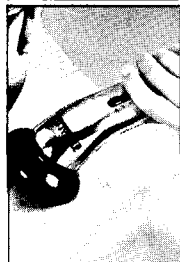
The LWR provides an easy target for those seeking to prove that a phaseout of nuclear power is a "good thing." The proponents of nuclear power cling to the LWR for a variety of rational and not-so-rational reasons. Major companies have made an enormous investment in manufacturing capability and proprietary designs. These designs would become worthless if a revolutionary new design were to come into use. Experience building balloons was little help when the airplane came along. The irrational factors are, as usual, stronger. The visionary engineers and industrialists who helped bring nuclear power into commercial use 25 years ago are now the program managers and company presidents. They are at what should be the peak of their careers. Many were motivated by dreams of non-polluting power and by the chance to turn the horror of the atomic bomb into something of merit. It was hard enough for them to see the industry to which they devoted their careers crumbling, but the public questioning of their abilities and their motives was intolerable. The all too human response when one's best efforts have unaccountably failed is to blame others.

The leadership of the nuclear industry is firmly convinced that when the lights begin to go out, the public will see the error of its ways and demand nuclear power. Until that time, any hint that the existing nuclear power plants are not good enough—and a revolutionary new design would imply precisely that—is heresy. The strongest arguments against new power plants are being made by those who have invested their prestige in the older ones.

The unwritten agreement to limit the discussion of nuclear power to the light water reactor has cost the nation dearly in time and in lives. It will eventually become even more costly—several countries have begun to recognize the advantages that small, inherently safe reactors have for export to industrializing countries and even to the loose confederation of power-generating utilities that supply the United States. We may eventually become importers of the technology we tried to stifle. □

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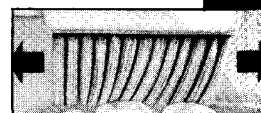


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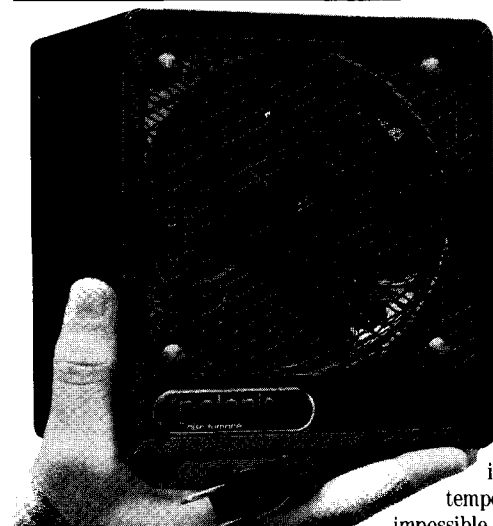


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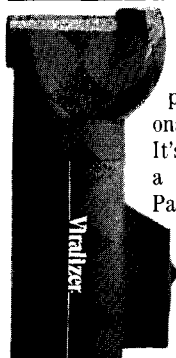
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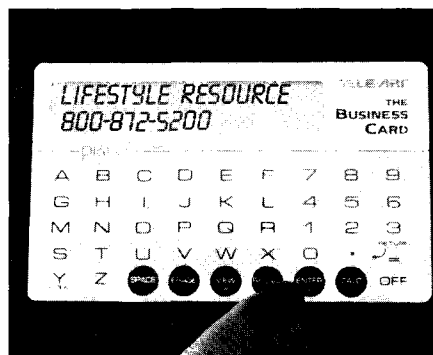
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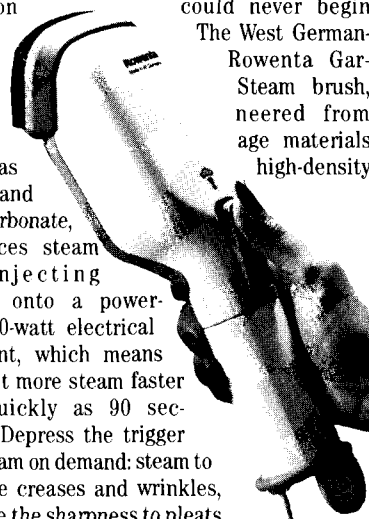
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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Questions of Perspective

Knowledge can bring imbalance. Sometimes the forest obscures the trees. I got a reminder of this over Thanksgiving when I saw again on TV the last two hours of Attenborough's *Gandhi* and saw again how well directed it is, not least in the handling of crowds. How much more dynamic the use of crowds is here than in *The Last Emperor*, whose spectacles

Walker
(Universal)

were cheered by many who were cool to the spectacle in *Gandhi*. These two reactions seemed foreordained. Bertolucci is a pantheon auteur, with a reputation as an intellectual. Attenborough is only a show-biz pro. Ergo...

The prejudice against *Gandhi* began, I'd say, before it was released. Politically informed people suspected that a film about the Mahatma, particularly a big-budget blockbuster, could not possibly deal adequately with his life and ideas and probably ought not to have been made. What could the result possibly be other than a gilded monument for juveniles of all ages? Well, the finished film certainly was a great way from the whole story; a considerable debate about it followed in this journal—always on the subject of the script. But that is not my point. The foreword to the film stipulating that it was incomplete didn't utterly excuse omissions or distortions; historical plays and film traditionally exercise some license, but that license has limits, which I'm not trying to extend. What happened with *Gandhi*, as my TV refresher confirmed for me, was that purely political criticism argued with the forest and ignored the trees. *Gandhi* is also good filmmaking, and I refuse to let its several Academy Awards persuade me otherwise.

A comparable imbalance has happened again, with Attenborough's new film, *Cry Freedom*—at a lower level but in much the same proportions. Again it was expected that no Hollywood-backed picture about Steve Biko could possibly be anything

but pious liberal self-service. Though in proof the script isn't much more than that, once again filmmaking has been shortchanged. Once again Attenborough—though not at the pitch of *Gandhi* and not without some candied touches—directed with clarity and force; and with a cast not nearly at the stratospheric level of his *Gandhi* actors, brought forth some vivid performances. But he's not getting much credit for it.

No one wants to see films only because they are well made, and no one ought to be unaware of fact-fiddling. But analysis and discrimination are surely attributes of taste. To cite a titanic example, few readers brush aside Büchner's *Danton's Death* because he distorted facts to help his play. Does an artist have to be a titan—and Attenborough is not even pygmy size on this scale—in order to deserve the same principles of judgment?

Now comes another historical epic that may provoke a different reaction from the historically scrupulous. *Walker* is by Alex Cox, a director from whom *Cry Freedom* would be about as likely as *Repo Man*, his first film, would be from Attenborough. Cox's first three films earned him the wild-man reputation that he wanted. *Repo Man* was made for an age and space group far away from my own spaciness. I thought the same would be true of *Sid and Nancy*, and it was—but the film was done with such unforgiving anger at the spiritual famines of our time that it went far past the parochial. Cox's next film, *Straight to Hell*, slid back beyond *Repo Man*—a parody Western like a cheap imitation of Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboys*. I endured 20 minutes of it.

Walker is his first big-bucks venture, but even though it was expensive and even though it's about an erstwhile American hero, Cox has very probably earned an anticipation quite different from Attenborough's because he has proved that he's a bronco. Bronco he still is. His new film deals rhapsodically with William Walker, the San Francisco

newspaper editor in the 1850s, who was inflamed with the ideal of Manifest Destiny. He tried, with a small private army, to "liberate" parts of Mexico in 1853 and failed. In May 1855 he invaded Nicaragua with 58 men and met initially with success. Commodore Vanderbilt's agents encouraged him because they wanted trade routes between oceans. American Southerners encouraged him because they wanted more slave states. A year after he arrived, a year that was awash in blood—not much of which we are spared—he was president of Nicaragua. Power madness and intrigue did their usual work, and by 1857 he was through.

The film omits that he did in fact try another Nicaraguan invasion later that year, without luck. The film does tell us that in 1860 he tried liberating Honduras, but a firing squad took care of that invasion, and Walker too.

Rudy Wurlitzer, the novelist who wrote a screenplay for Sam Peckinpah (*Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*), wrote *Walker* and is well-matched with Cox, who does a lot of Peckinpah homage—slo-mo battle, sprightly blood-spurtings. The script is less a developed chronicle than a series of episodes—like a 19th-century opera libretto with creaky continuity and a large number of set pieces. The episodes are flashy, erotic, savage, sul-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Dead. John Huston's last film respects Joyce's own cosmic story, but could not possibly encompass it. The real reward is Anjelica Huston's Eve-like performance as Greta. (Reviewed 12/21/87)

House of Games. David Mamet establishes himself as a front-rank director-writer with this seemingly realistic yet abstract work about deceit and compulsion. (11/16/87)

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid. Almost overflows the screen with vitality. The makers of *My Beautiful Laundrette* deal here with race in London. Unique and strong. (11/30/87)

The Wannsee Conference. The point is its tone—cool and businesslike. A re-enactment of the 1942 conference in which the Nazis settled the Final Solution. (12/7/87)

SK

phurous, sometimes disconnected even though there are bridges of narration or titles. Credibility—or at least Walker's mortality—is never the issue. He walks undisturbed down streets full of gunfire and pirouetting bodies. At one point he finds a piano in a house where he is being savagely besieged and sits down to play while his men fall around him. A Napoleonic sense of mission is apparently his shield, but sometimes he merely seems concentrated elsewhere, like Buster Keaton moving serenely through the Civil War in *The General*.

Ed Harris plays Walker and is passable as long as he does absolutely nothing. When he is just being photographed, his cheekbones look good. When he moves, he seems runty and comic, and when he "thunders" commands, he squeaks.

But most of the episodes that make up the film are dazzlingly directed and strikingly photographed. When Walker rides his horse into a cathedral, when the camera looks straight down on a man praying amid carnage, the isolated mo-

ment is fine, like a good aria or duo in the middle of a silly opera. Cox directs with an abandon—talented abandon—that makes us think he wants the film's accountants to bleed as much as Walker's troops. From about the middle on, he begins to indulge in that last resort of high spirits in history—anachronism. Walker makes the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*; an automobile is seen; a helicopter and modern U.S. troops rescue Walker at the end of his presidency.

These touches are supposed to nudge us to comparison with present-day Nicaragua, where *Walker* was shot. And just to hammer it all home, we see Reagan and present-day action over the closing credits. But these and other heavy thumbprints may not affect Cox's reception adversely. He arrives as an established anti-establishment figure. He knows the score. Because Cox is hip, there may be those willing to look past his twiddlings with history, and his servility to his own audience, to perceive his exceptional filmmaking gifts.

Even more than his father, Alexander Cockburn is representative of a certain variety of British malcontent and expatriate (usually of the left) who, already disagreeably at odds with his own country but unable to impress it with his ill-humor, sets off to find some other country in which he may more easily indulge his bile. As an expatriate, he is not expected to be knowledgeable, indeed his distance from his surroundings is admired as the very condition of criticism; and he cannot be accused of disloyalty to all that the country cherishes.

These British roamers have been the reverse side of the imperialist. The world is their oyster. They've never lacked for an audience, as Shaw observed when he got off the boat in New York; he announced to the waiting reporters that he knew what they expected, and wanted, from a British visitor: some malignant, ill-informed criticism of Americans. In our time the exemplar of this imperial arrogance of the free-booting left has been Graham Greene, expatriate in Paris, ever traveling at someone else's expense, ever ready with criticisms of any Western democracy—but blind and deaf, suddenly, in Moscow or Havana.

Since Alexander Cockburn arrived in the United States in 1972, his journalism has been published mainly in journals that hover on what remains of the radical left. (Like a good radical, Cockburn also contributes to *House and Garden*.) In other words, he writes for a coterie, he feeds the yawns at Elaine's. And he has also been a contributing columnist to the *Wall Street Journal*. How so? The *Wall Street Journal* is not dumb. Dow Jones knows how to add. It asked Cockburn to contribute (and he obliged) because he is about no really serious business. The mouthpiece of American capitalism prints Cockburn to show how shallow and frivolous the left is, and sends the radical giggling all the way to the bank.

This collection of Cockburn's columns is divided into two almost equally long sections. First there are the "Life Studies" of the subtitle, in which his longer essays are separated into sections: "Deep Background" (two personal memoirs), "Imperial Emblems," "Countries Lost and Found," "Tastes of the Times," "War FEVERS," and "Terms of the Trade" (discussions of journalism). The second half is what he calls "An Archive of the Reagan Era, 1976-1987." In this "archive"—a word usually reserved for precise records of fact—he reprints in chronological order some of the columns and the comments he

THE FIFTH COLUMNIST

Corruptions of Empire: Life Studies & The Reagan Era by Alexander Cockburn

(Verso, 479 pp., \$22.95)

As the *Times* of London's correspondent in the United States, Claud Cockburn's singular achievement was to send it reports that were total fabrications, which the *Times*, trusting its correspondent, naturally printed. The schoolboy in each of us may snigger when we first hear of such a prank. But pranks—even more, pranksters—soon irk; and when they involve such a betrayal of trust as Claud Cockburn's, they call into question his commitment to fact, and to truth.

Now his son Alexander Cockburn, regular columnist for the *Nation* and erstwhile columnist for the *Village Voice*, tells of an occasion when his father arrived at his school for "vital negotiations with the headmaster" wearing no socks. The father gave the embarrassed son a cock-and-bull explanation. The story itself is engaging enough, until the younger Cockburn adds: "It was a fine try, and . . . I felt . . . the powerful urge to become a journalist, since only a journalist (such as my father) could have conceived such a preposterous

story at a moment's notice and within moments recounted it with such vibrant conviction." This willful comment not only recalls his father's own dispatches; it reinforces the wariness with which one reads anything the son writes, including the columns, and the flakes peeled from columns, that are collected in this volume.

It also brings to mind the father's indifference to the truth as a reporter for the Communist *Daily Worker* during the Spanish Civil War, although the truth was painfully clear to George Orwell (who was actually fighting for the Republicans) and was set down by him in *Homage to Catalonia*. The same disrespect for the truth is all too plain in the son's defense of every anti-American tyrant and regime in the Third World, including Qaddafi. This volume provides almost 500 pages of proof of the facility of someone who felt "the urge" to become a journalist out of admiration for a talent to concoct a "preposterous story" and recite it with "vibrant conviction."

wrote in those years. Cockburn calls himself an "exile," from Ireland to England to America. Who, exactly, "exiled" him? He is, rather, a self-exile, choosing to live among the rich and the celebrities. Cockburn has lived in and off America for 15 years, yet even the pieces of this volume that pretend to describe American society speak only of someone who never met an American. The thinness of Cockburn's experience of America is striking. No historian who comes to study the Reagan era will find anything of use in this "archive."

MANY OF his pieces about America are gathered in the section called "Tastes of the Times," which is enough of a giveaway—our radical is an epicure. They are: a review of Gay Talese's *Thy Neighbor's Wife*; a review of the chic cookbooks selling in America, which he calls "gastro-porn"; an explanation of the popularity of ethnic foods from the Third World in terms of the imperialism of the United States, in which he quotes with approval a friend's remark, "You integrate the Third World into American cuisine while at the same time segregating it from American society"; an account of Des E. Seint's luxurious 15-acre property and house in Pennsylvania; a description of the Deco District of Miami Beach; and a long gaze at Vanna White. *That* is the America of this book. It tells of someone who lives mostly among the media, who draws his knowledge of America from newspapers, magazines, and books he is sent to review. This champion of the underdog has scarcely a sentence about the poor, or the underclass, or the immigrants from the Third World, or the blacks, or even the ordinary middle-class Americans who are the mainstream, the steadying ballast, of this country. They are all absent.

Cockburn's is an America without geography. There is no Indiana, no Missouri, no South, no West, no regions at all; only the coasts of Medialand, Cockburn's own dizzy Disneyworld. And having no geography, Cockburn's America has no history. One would not know from these 500 pages that America has grown, changed, suffered. Cockburn's picture of America is static. In the "Reagan Era," there is no debate anywhere, not in Congress, not inside the administration. There is only conformity, and conspiracy. But one never learns who it is that Cockburn thinks runs or "owns" America. This enemy of capitalism never sufficiently identifies any corporate structure, or indeed any corporation, that would tell us any-

thing about the nature of capitalism. Capitalism is not a system that has grown and changed; it is, as good radicals say, reified. Finally it has no existence for Cockburn; it is merely a label for the upscale consumerism from which he takes his swill.

Cockburn's America is also riddled with militarism, another label to which he gives no meaning. Nothing in these pages suggests that he has looked at the "military-industrial complex" with the insight even of Eisenhower when he first used the phrase. So what is this militarism? It is "folly." The 19th-century American installation on the Tortugas was "folly." The recommissioning of the USS *New Jersey* was "folly." The F-14 is "folly." Now, they may all be folly, but to present them only as such is not an analysis. Marx was never satisfied to dismiss anything as folly.

AS HE ANNOUNCES, Cockburn arrived in the States when the burglars entered the Democratic Party's offices in Watergate. In reaching back from Oliver North to Gordon Liddy, he tells us that Liddy "embodied the spirit of fascism at the level of grand guignol." "Grand guignol" is inept as a characterization of Liddy; but it is the meaninglessness of "fascism" in Cockburn's mythology that finally becomes crushing in its repetition. When one is told that Baden Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, was "the *echt* British fascist," or that the Klansmen and neo-Nazis who killed five demonstrators in Greensboro in 1979 represented the "native fascism" of America, one loses all sense of the relationship of words to reality. Thus, toward the end of this collection we find that Reagan's media role during a crisis, such as the downing of KAL 007, is "master of ceremonies in electronic equivalents of a Nuremberg Rally," an analogy as indecent as it is inappropriate. But then the real estate developers in Miami Beach have already been compared to "the Goths massing before Rome, or Bomber Command proceeding toward Dresden." (It is typical of Cockburn that when he searches for a World War II equivalent to the Goths, he finds the Americans and the British.)

These preposterous analogies are not merely faults of style. They are failures of the mind, avoidances of any demand to be exact. "The British authorities" during the war were "scarcely less hostile to Communists than to the Nazis—and in many cases more so." Wrong. Anyhow, the war broke out in 1939 because at the very time that the British authorities were

negotiating earnestly with Stalin to try to deter the anticipated Nazi aggression, Stalin was going behind their backs to negotiate a pact with Hitler instead.

"At school I would hear grim tales of the Kenyan Mau Mau and then go home to hear my father consider such events in a very different way." Then his father was wrong; those grim tales were accurate, and there is no lightly "different way" in which to consider the Kikuyu ferocity that was eventually turned against blacks in Kenya, especially the Nilotic-speaking Luo, as well as against whites. But then Cockburn elsewhere brushes aside any notion that tribal conflicts have remained a problem in Africa: that is another "imperialist" fable.

Without Ian Fleming, the author of the James Bond stories, "we would have had no OSS, hence no CIA. The cold war would have ended in the early 1960s. We would have had no Vietnam, no Nixon, no Reagan, and no Star Wars. . . . Bond became the embodiment of Western discourse on the cold war." Wrong. Fatuous. Meaningless. "The unanimity with which the anti-Sandinista consensus has been carried forward is truly totalitarian." Wrong. It is impossible to find (Reagan has found it impossible to find) any anti-Sandinista or pro-*contra* consensus in Congress, the press, or the American people.

EXAMPLES OF the vibrant lie in these pages could be multiplied. But let us see what Cockburn says of those he befriends and exonerates. Consider the terrorists, and Qaddafi. Throughout this volume, terrorism is discussed as if it were a mischief as trifling as wearing no socks to visit a headmaster. The hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* is airily dismissed, although it included the cold-blooded murder of an old man in a wheelchair, who was pitched overboard. Such behavior seems to cause Cockburn no affright. Why should it, when he makes this case for Qaddafi:

A war against "terror" substitutes the geography of political paranoia and prime-time posturing for the geography of the real world. Is terrorism the main enemy, as opposed to famine, disease, underdevelopment? Is it a matter of national self-congratulation that when it comes to the map of paranoia, the U.S. inhabits the same latitudes in which it locates its foe Colonel Qaddafi, though with infinitely more consequence for the world, and thus deserving of far greater censure.

That was printed by the *Wall Street Journal*. Nine days later Cockburn pursued

his case in the *Nation*:

Only when we examine the roots of the Qaddafi obsession can we understand why press coverage of the Libyan leader has been so consistently appalling.

The function of the superfiend is to act as receptacle for fantasies of an imperial, military, racist, and sexual nature, with the fantasist experiencing no moral qualms about his reveries, reasoning that when it comes to absolute evil, normal standards of behavior cease to apply.

In these self-exposing passages, the placement of "terror" in quotation marks is only the first giveaway. Cockburn appears to be utterly without qualms that the avowed method of the terrorist is to kill and to maim innocent people.

In the two personal memoirs with which this volume opens, and in many of its bits and pieces, Cockburn makes much of his filial attachment to, his admiration of, and his professional debt to his father. So it is he who leads us back from the "Reagan Era" to the penumbra of the world in which Claud Cockburn thrived (even if not financially) in Britain in the 1930s, and later in the cold war: the world in which the Communists (Claud Cockburn was one) enjoyed the protections of a democracy, even as they

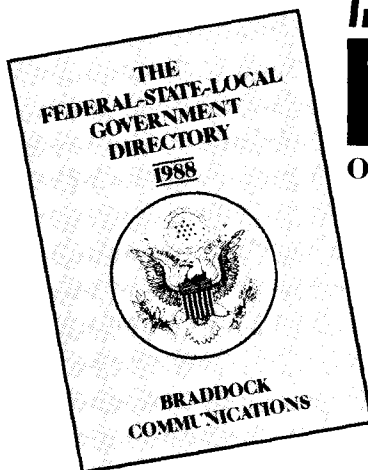
belittled and sought to overthrow it.

It was a time of treachery, actual and possible; the capacity for treachery seemed to be in the very warp and woof of almost every personal relationship. There had been the collaborators in Europe, of course; and what was unnerving in Britain was to wonder who would have collaborated if Hitler had invaded and occupied the island, not only among the titled, the successful, and the powerful, but among one's own friends and acquaintances. Even in the Resistance movements, among the partisans and the guerrillas whom we were exhorted to admire, there was treachery. Alongside the genuinely brave were those who used the Resistance to pay off old scores, above all the Communists, who found a cover for systematically liquidating their political enemies. And after the war, there was worse. In much of liberated Europe, but especially in the countries subjected to Soviet domination, the "People's Tribunals" went to work, and two forms of treachery were brought into play: the betrayer who informed on his friend or neighbor, and the accused who gave way and "confessed" to his "crimes" against the state.

Even if we had been unable to understand what the tribunals were doing from

newspaper accounts, we had—thank God, we had—Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, and Orwell's implacable denunciations of the manner in which the Communists seized power in Spain. But beyond the seizure of power that he had observed, what made one so alert to the Communists' behavior was its appropriateness to a postwar Europe in which the air reeked of treachery. I remember inventing a "game" that we played over drinks in pubs on Fleet Street. "Which of our friends would one (a) least and (b) most like to be the presiding judge of the People's Tribunal before which one was summoned?" I cannot deny the black humor in the game; but we played it. (Neoconservatives might be disconcerted to know whose name was most frequently chosen, almost unanimously, to be (a).)

As a young journalist at the time, I vigorously acquainted with Claud Cockburn (an enjoyment I have been spared with his son). His company could be engaging, if resistible; in argument he was disarming even when he was provocative; and he was indeed a born raconteur, mainly of stories about himself. A lack of veracity is not as troubling in a raconteur as it is in a journalist. What I found disturbing was Cockburn's former but



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long-sustained communism—this was the mid-'50s and the early '60s—and the levity with which he asked one to accept it; not to worry about it a bit; to think nothing of it.

AND ALWAYS the fellow travelers slunk behind, alongside, and sometimes even ahead of the Communists, gifted in deceit, more practiced still in self-deceit, despised even by the Communists who, where they came to power, exterminated such despicable and untrustworthy allies. As Alexander Cockburn leads us back, then, he returns us to himself, to some questions about the fellow traveler of today. For the sake of appearances (the fellow traveler of the late 20th century has learned his lessons), he does not rush to the defense of the Soviet Union. Instead he avoids criticizing it, and "travels with" every anti-American oppressor of his own people, every "left-wing" enemy of Western democracy, and offers his apologies for terrorists. (Though in the *Voice* on January 20, 1980, Cockburn defended the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan *exactly* as the fellow traveler of the '40s and '50s would have:

We all have to go one day, but pray God let it not be over Afghanistan. An unspeakable country filled with unspeakable people, sheepshaggers and smugglers, who have furnished in their leisure hours some of the worst arts and crafts ever to penetrate the occidental world.

I yield to none in my sympathy to those prostrate beneath the Russian jackboot, but if ever a country deserved rape it's Afghanistan. Nothing but mountains filled with barbarous ethnics with views as medieval as their muskets, and unspeakably cruel too.

And as proof for his prejudice, Cockburn cites the very "Victorian child's fiction" that he condemns in everybody else's hands. Please note also that Cockburn, who has made a career out of checking for other people's omissions, omits this column from his own book.)

It's clear enough what Cockburn is about. His object is the steady and monotonous detraction of any virtue from the struggles and achievements of the United States (which he has ungratefully chosen to be his home); of England (which he also, as a self-proclaiming Irishman, fed off for many years); of Western imperialism (naturally there is a column about the awful massacre at Amritsar, and just as naturally no mention of the horror of the British government at what General Dyer had done—and of the British army itself, and of the board of in-

quiry that condemned him); and of Western civilization itself. But even in Cockburn it is startling to come across an attack on nothing less than the "Judeo-Christian Tradition." "We need only glance at the Old Testament to find a deity of savagery, urging his chosen people to acts of genocide. It is a saga of unrelenting ferocity rivaled only by that other foundation stone of Western culture, the *Iliad*."

Anyone who can read the *Iliad* only as a tale of unrelenting ferocity is an illiterate; it stands at the entrance to our civilization as an unrelenting picture of the horror and the waste of war. Of course, it would be a strange Jew or Christian who had not at one time or another made some jest about the record of human struggle, grandeur, quarrelsomeness, and even absurdity to be found in the Old Testament. But even Cockburn must know that the "deity of savagery, urging his chosen people to acts of genocide" is an image that has frequently been used over the centuries to castigate the Jews. In fact, in this century it has been used for a specific political purpose (as in Edward Said's recent emphasis on Joshua's wars in Canaan in an argument against Israel)—to stoke the fires of anti-Zionism.

Never mind that Cockburn glibly misreads whole books of the Bible. Never mind that under the instruction of the deity of savagery Moses did not urge his Jews to kill the Egyptians, but led them peaceably out of Egypt; or that Pharaoh emerges as a fairly sympathetic, troubled figure, whose Jewish slave Joseph serves him wisely and well and is not faithless even with his wife; or that in this record of unrelenting ferocity there are Job and Jeremiah and Ruth, and the prophecies of Isaiah. In attacking these "foundation stones" of our civilization, Cockburn is feeding his relentless hostility to Israel with an interpretation of the Jewish god so one-sided and spiteful that it is hard to see how his anti-Zionism can be altogether disentangled from anti-Semitism.

IT IS the old game of the fellow traveler to disguise enmity as criticism. Cockburn can represent his treachery to the West, its democracies, and its values as just opposition to political and economic systems he deplores. What needs to be emphasized, therefore, is that his final betrayal is of precisely such opposition, of precisely the left itself. These pages are spattered with sneers at those who used to be called social democrats in Europe and are generally known as liberals in America. The postwar Labour gov-

ernment in Britain, which created the welfare state that not even Margaret Thatcher would try to pull down in its entirety, is dismissed in a sentence: "Social democracy in the Attlee variant, so impotent in the face of the United States, had also fostered a new audience for middlebrow comedy."

The first statement is untrue (it would have been interesting to ask Truman if Clement Attlee, or his commanding foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, was impotent); the second statement is a snobbish put-down with a pretense to aestheticism. This is the vein in which Cockburn likes to cite Noam Chomsky on, say, "the current pontification about human rights," and then proceed to be withering about Carter's campaign: "In the course of this process of rebirth [of American concern for human rights abroad] nothing has been more distasteful than the spectacle of American liberals once more scrambling to action stations and in fact stoking up cold war furnaces." (Carter was doing that in 1977?) And the same spirit presides in the sly Marcusian observation, "But very often the 'liberal' is nothing much more than an ideological policeman working on behalf of the right"; or the equally Marcusian remark that all that has improved in Britain since 1945 is "the coercive apparatus of the state."

IN SUM, the people that Cockburn really loathes are the active reformers of the left. FDR and the New Deal receive no commendation from Cockburn, as they did not from the Communists ("such as my father") in the 1930s. Yet the social democrats were astonishing men, and their tradition is an astonishing tradition, one that still informs some of the left. The social democrats, the liberals, would not sell one good—freedom or democracy—in order to attain another good—equality or social justice. They may have been, as their successors are today, modest men, inhabiting a gray world of complex truths and ambiguity, where one's loyalties are often divided; but if one picks one's way through the trouble with some honesty, none of the loyalties need be forsaken. These were the men, Léon Blum in France and Bevin in Britain, who preserved the honor of the left in standing resolutely against dictatorship of either the left or the right; and after the war men now forgotten, Kurt Schumacher in West Germany and Alcide de Gasperi in Italy, as socialists, held their nations free from Communist domination at a time when we fearfully watched every election in

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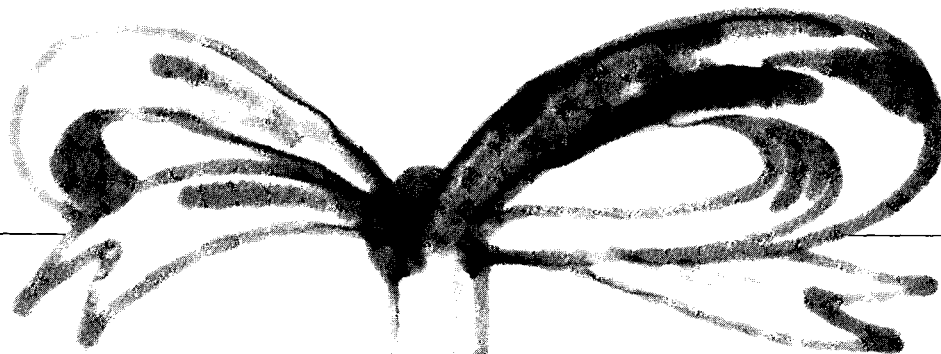
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Alexander Cockburn feeds to a new generation of the left (many of whose members in America are protected and pampered at home, and have never faced the treachery that can run into every political as well as personal relationship) the old arguments for dishonor, for disrespect for the truth, for regarding democracy as a disease. This left may seem to be small, it is indeed a coterie, but it is vocal and active; and it saps the confidence and confuses the mind of what ought to be the true left in the Democratic Party, making it feel guilty if it thinks to keep America strong, or to agree that only a healthy economy, from which some people will profit more than others, can extend a useful and caring hand of help to the poor and the disadvantaged.

What is more, in Cockburn's kind of left there really is no wish to win. If anything is clear from this collection it is Cockburn's comfort with the right wing in power, and the further to the right the better, because then the world is simple, and the extremist looks brilliant, and everything is easier to criticize. That is the classical perversion of the radical: beyond the attraction to left-wing dictators is the virtual incitement of the right-wing to take power. In the end totalitarianism, of the right as well as left, is more exhilarating to Cockburn than the quiet committee ways of a democracy. He likes to live where people will hurt each other. Then there will be something to write about, something to make his cynicism smart.

HENRY FAIRLIE

MAN OF THE WORLD

John Dryden and His World
by James Anderson Winn

(Yale University Press, 629 pp., \$29.95)

It is election eve, 1988. Rebellious Democrats call upon their candidate, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, to remove Edward Kennedy from the ticket. Provoked by new revelations about Marilyn Monroe, Congress debates a Bill of Exclusion that would bar any member of the Kennedy family from succeeding to the presidency. The Dissenter's Party, founded by loyalists of the seven candidates eliminated by scandal, declares a nationwide strike against the media. Meanwhile, the Republican candidate, Pat Robertson, has committed his party to a Test Act, requiring mandatory testing of every public official for drugs, AIDS, and atheism. Opinion polls reveal that 90 percent of the American people believe the great Santa Barbara quake to have been an act of divine retribution on sinful California. Now Maj. Titus Tonge, a former supporter of Lyndon LaRouche, claims to have proof that the quake was actually an underground nuclear explosion intended to assassinate the president. He implicates the pope and Fidel Castro. At first reporters laugh off this plot, but when chief investigator Baker is found dead in Central Park, subpoenas are slapped on Mario Cuomo and leading Latinos. A new comet is discovered. The

Constitution is stolen. Iran makes peace with Iraq. Fifty banks default. Oliver North flees to the Soviet Union. And the most famous American poet writes a great poem comparing the current state of affairs to certain events in 17th-century England. Everybody reads it.

This is, of course, a very improbable story. Strange things may happen in America—but nothing quite so strange as that stuff about the poem. American poets do not write works like *Absalom and Achitophel*, and the American public does not read them. It cannot be that material is lacking. The Popish Plot and the Earl of Shaftesbury are not inherently more interesting than the Iran-*contra* scandal and Robert Bork, nor do they offer richer models for satire or heroic tragedy. We live in fabulous times. Yet poets do not rise to the occasion. Where is John Dryden now that we need him?

He seems very distant. For Dryden (1631-1700) does not fit the modern model of what a poet is supposed to be. He does not seem to care much for the outdoors or the Self; he pays more attention to the news of the day than to the mystery of things. He thinks of the poet as a social being, and of poetry as a social activity. He is not even ashamed to be

poet laureate. Worse yet, he actually gets along with people in power. In more romantic ages, many critics have found it hard to believe that such a being could be a poet at all. Yet this public figure, this man of the world, is not only one of the great poets in English; he is probably the writer who has most influenced the language that everyone uses, the common style in which we write and think.

This bears some thinking about. If Dryden is not what a poet is supposed to be, then perhaps it is our image of the poet, not Dryden, that needs refurbishing. Perhaps we can learn from him. Many good poets have thought so. Auden called Dryden "without any doubt, the Greatest Occasional Poet in English." This is high praise from one pro to another. Only someone who has tried the public manner, voicing what is on everyone's mind without insulting anyone's intelligence, can appreciate the difficulty of the performance. Auden himself had mixed success as an occasional poet; embarrassed at finding himself on stage, he worried about the temptation to lie and to charm, and his verse shows the strain. But others have not done it better. Ever since Dryden, the laureateship has been a running joke. Nor has there ever been a Great American Occasional Poet. At their best our poets make themselves into a world, but they are not worldly. Just how does Dryden do it?

To begin with, he has a very firm sense of occasion. This sounds simpler than it is. Dryden's poems seldom arise from an undefined situation, a subconscious urge, a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; indeed, they are seldom voluntary. Instead, someone commissions him to write: a preface to a play, a song for St. Cecilia. Or perhaps some public event calls for notice: a king is crowned or overthrown, London is racked by fire and plague, an enemy attacks him, a promising young poet dies, a century comes to an end. It is the poet's job to make those moments live forever. But first he has to understand the special character of the moment—not only its meaning for him, but its place in history, politics, and society. Not even the grave is a private place for Dryden, because each death sets off ripples among family and the larger circle of acquaintance, stretching to posterity. Occasions matter to him. He cares about genealogy and succession (apparently far more than he ever cared about his wife), and he never lets the precise circumstances of the event dissolve into poetic

generalities. This poet lives full time in the here and now.

Yet he also superimposes some other time and place on them. That is a second principle of Dryden's art: nothing is real until it has happened twice. Thus *Absalom and Achitophel* is situated not in ancient Israel or in 17th-century England, but somewhere between them, in a state of surmise (like my account of Election '88). Dryden is a master of the higher doublethink, of that fusion of incongruities that blends two independent stories or characters into one timeless type—not King David or Charles II, but the set that consists of both:

He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand
The joyful people thronged to see him land,
Covering the beach, and blackening all the
strand;
But, like the Prince of Angels from his
height,
Comes tumbling downward with dimin-
ished light.

Such effects come naturally to poets raised on Latin and Greek and the Bible. For centuries British schoolboys were trained to inhabit an imaginary Rome or Jerusalem that was somehow more real than this rapidly passing London. But Dryden's genius for allusion especially

suited his age. Restoration England was obsessed with finding historical parallels for itself. It was as if the nation experienced a collective feeling of déjà vu. Perhaps at a time of such violent changes, when Britain threatened to tear itself apart, people took comfort in remarking that such things had all happened before, that they were in fact not alarming but strangely familiar. Dryden gives his public that reassurance.

That is to say, he knows his audience. Many of his poems were aimed at specific people, and as a leading London playwright he could predict who would be in the theater. The usefulness of this keen, exact sense of audience is a third lesson that Dryden can teach. Like Timotheus in "Alexander's Feast," he knows just what strings to pull in order to make the puppets dance to his tune. But unlike Timotheus, he does not merely manipulate his audience; he includes himself in it. As James Winn frequently points out in his fine new biography, Dryden's favorite pronoun is "we." This poet belongs to a group, or to a series of groups: family, party, profession, class, congregation, and nation. He seldom indulges the singular, personal "I." Hence reading Dryden means reading Dryden's

world. Part of his strength consists of the hosts that he summons around him, the friends who support him, the public he civilly asks to share his concerns. Nor does he forget what company his enemies keep. Even his archrival Shadwell is dissected, in "Mac Flecknoe," not as a freak, but as the monarch of a mob of dunces. In an odd way the attack is hardly personal. It only nudges Shadwell to another world.

In the last resort, however, a poet's world is language, and it is in his language that Dryden lives. It seems so easy, so effortless a style because he worked so hard on it. According to Samuel Johnson's famous formulation, Dryden found English poetry brick and left it marble. But the smoothness of the image is deceptive. The emperor Augustus could turn Rome to marble (in the epigram of Suetonius that Johnson is adapting) as the emblem of his durable, unbreakable rule, the triumph of a one-party state; but Dryden had to negotiate his language. He found English a political battlefield, and left it a common ground where different parties could meet.

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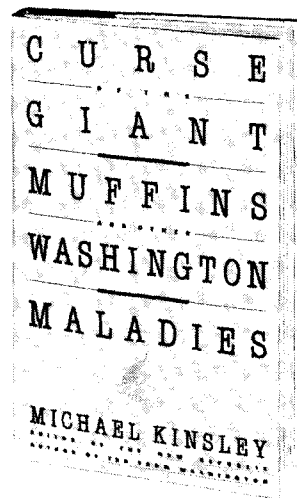
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Cavaliers had used them as weapons against their sober, homespun foes. Many good words, such as "conscience" and "the people," had been tarnished. The British had learned to hate one another's accents. A French phrase, a biblical "thee," a Latinate construction, a casual use of slang, a series of short, blunt words: each could declare an uncompromising political and religious allegiance. A poet devoted to peace and harmony would have to mold a new style.

Such crises of language are far from uncommon. They occur whenever political feelings run high and poets feel an urgent need to address the public. The language, too long neglected, may not be there when they need it. During the Vietnam War, for instance, when so many poets suddenly found themselves reading at anti-war rallies, they realized that their usual styles were not loud enough. Some tried to sound like Whitman or Blake; some like translations of Neruda. But these styles did not really suit the occasion (Whitman was not only too long-winded, but too private, and not good at outrage). Folk music worked better. Moreover, some poets discovered that the anti-war style committed them, linguistically as well as politically, to positions that were not their own, as if they might have to turn into Allen Ginsberg against their will. American English itself, like postwar German, began to seem contaminated. It may not have recovered yet. Most of the poetry of that time has been mercifully forgotten, but the crisis in language was never resolved. No poet emerged who caught just the right public voice, and the style of American poetry soon returned to its private musings. Election '88 will have no bard.

DRYDEN WAS different. Poets in his day were closer to power and closer to each other. During the Protectorate, for instance, he worked for the government, perhaps in the same office where Milton and Marvell were employed (though no record survives of how they got on together). More important, through both background and education he grew up acquainted with two distinct styles—the plainspoken Puritan line of his family, and the more florid and classical Royalist manner he learned at Westminster School. Much of his art may be viewed as a reconciliation of those two modes. The nostalgia for the martyred king and the England that had passed, and the apocalyptic sense of a covenant

renewed, join in his earliest work and survive to the end, when the poet himself had fallen from political favor.

To make them join, Dryden had to find a common thread, and he found it in the energy and clarity of argument that the warring parties had used against each other:

Thus have I made my own opinions clear,
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear;
And this unpolished, rugged verse, I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

It is a style that is equal to many occasions. Capable of extreme aristocratic finesse, as in Dryden's famous remark that the best satire disdains "the slovenly butchering of a man" and prefers "the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place," it is also capable of unaffected directness. Anyone who knows English can understand it. Dryden, one of the least democratic of poets, developed the most democratic of styles.

It was also a style made to last. In the late 17th century—when the language was changing so rapidly that Shakespeare began to seem antique, as if he might need translation (like Chaucer) into modern English—many writers

feared that the next generation would not be able to read them. That did not happen. Three hundred years later, Dryden remains easier to read than many of our contemporaries. This is a remarkable fact. We live in a world where English has been scattered all over the globe, yet most readers of English still feel at home in the language of that vanished time and place, that little court and church. The reasons for this peculiar equilibrium are massive and complex. No one author can be given much of the credit. But Dryden played his part. He wrote for empires yet unborn, and honed a style so sharp and clear that time could not obscure it.

Yet even the best occasional verse does run into one problem: the reader has to know something in order to get the point. Who is this Achitophel, this milk-white hind, this Robert Howard, this Flecknoe? Who will know Pat Robertson's name a few years from now? Above all, who will care? Occasional verse can seem as monumentally boring as the local news in a foreign paper, or as a ball game in which no one keeps score. Dryden has to have footnotes—not for the sake of scholarship, just to make ba-

sic sense. In this respect Winn's book performs a valuable service. Informative, wide-ranging, accessibly written, it tells us everything we need to know and then some. Many details of Dryden's poetry take on a new life. For instance, any reader who has been horrified by Alexander's "zeal to destroy" the homes and temples of his conquered enemies ought to know what Dryden thought about King William's militarism. Winn charts the tangled course of the poet's religious and political alliances, and does not neglect to note who paid his bills. No previous biography has been so rich, or placed this man of the world so firmly in the world around him.

What remains elusive, however, is the man himself. What was Dryden like in private? Surprisingly little is known, and much of that little comes from the scandalous gossip that his enemies spread. We owe them the hint that Dryden had an affair with an actress, Anne Reeves; and Winn has been wonderfully thorough in tracking down every scrap of fact about her (she had good legs and may have become a nun). But hard evidence tends to be lacking. Even when Dryden was beaten nearly to death by a

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gang of hired thugs, the precise motives for the beating never came out. Winn does what he can. He works especially hard at showing how intimate Dryden could be with his public, how deftly he managed to draw the audience in. Something like a personality does in fact emerge. Yet we still do not know much about who Dryden was when he was at home.

Perhaps that is just as well. For Dryden satisfies a different need. There are plenty of marvelous anti-establishment poets, plenty of poets who tell us about their intense inner lives, plenty of poets who cherish a wish to be offered a government laurel so that they could turn it down, and more than enough poetic selves to go around. But not many poets since Dryden have known how to func-

tion in public, or possibly even be among the acknowledged legislators of the world. Dryden gives us back a sense of what it means to live in a particular time and place, to feel oneself a part of history even as it is forming. He does not think it beneath him to influence opinion or sway a jury, even by making it laugh. Above all he enjoys the world for what it is. Not everything a modern reader wants from poetry is to be found in Dryden. He is not a romantic figure. But no other poet can tell us more about the next election.

LAWRENCE LIPKING

Lawrence Lipking is the author most recently of *The Life of the Poet* (University of Chicago Press).

from American archives, that had never appeared before—and translated the whole, somewhat enlarging upon Lesure's annotations.

He has done a superb job. Debussy's epistolary style, like his music, is ironic, nuanced, allusive, ambiguous. Everything means more than it says. Like the characters in *Pelléas*—whom, in his later correspondence, he actually fell into the habit of quoting—Debussy intones his little sentences deadpan, depending on a vast reservoir of subtext to complete the meaning. Nichols is amazingly resourceful. Only occasionally is he forced to explain Debussy's wordplay and allusion in the footnotes. Elsewhere he finds marvelously apt English counterparts for Debussy's elusive locutions, and his words flow with ease, a faithful reflection of a great letter writer's thought and style.

So let us take up the promised inspection. It is timely. Now that modernism is decisively on the wane, historians have been setting in packs on the carcass. The letters of music's Ur-modernist should help take its measure. Indeed, answers to Harry Levin's old question "What Was Modernism?" come almost too quickly—and disquietingly. Observing its first stirrings prompts dreary comparison with the death throes we see around us. Rarely has modernism seemed more moribund than it does in light of this book.

Debussy's attitudes defined themselves, first of all, by what they opposed. Like all self-professed avant-gardists in music, from Schumann on down, he fastidiously despised the bourgeois public and the artists who catered to it. The book really catches fire with letter No. 25, written in February 1893 to André Poniatsowski, a rich aristocrat and entrepreneur who amused himself by patronizing advanced artists in all media (besides Debussy, they included Mallarmé and Degas). "There's also a new star on the musical horizon called Gustave Charpentier," fumed the as-yet-unrecognized Debussy,

destined, it seems to me, to achieve glory, riches, and complete freedom from aesthetic considerations. . . . He's a man of the people: to the extent, it seems, of writing an opera to be called *Marie* [it would eventually be called *Louise*] and set in Montmartre. The work which has just endeared him to the populace is called *La Vie du Poète*. The faded romanticism of the title tells us something about it but what you cannot possibly imagine is the work's total absence

THE FIRST MODERNIST

Debussy Letters

edited by François Lesure and Roger Nichols

(Harvard University Press, 355 pp., \$27.50)

Although he lived less than 18 of his 56 years after 1900, Claude Debussy is by common consent the first 20th-century composer, the man with whom modern music begins. With the exception of his somewhat younger friend and comrade Erik Satie (who possessed nothing approaching his range), the rest of what a demographer would call Debussy's musical "age cohort" consisted of "post-Wagnerians" at the last, or next to last, outpost of Romanticism (Strauss, Mahler), regional epigones of the symphonic tradition (Nielsen, Sibelius, Glazunov), post-Lisztian piano craftsmen at the "national" peripheries (Albeniz, MacDowell, Granados), and Franco-Italian *veristi* (Puccini, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Charpentier). These others stand at the end of historiographical chapters. Debussy alone managed, at a time when the dominant musical mood was one of exhaustion, to turn over a new leaf. His achievement remains extraordinary and enigmatic, and the opportunity to inspect the man at closer range, through his letters, is more than welcome.

This selection comprises roughly a quarter of Debussy's surviving correspondence. Prior to the appearance in

1980 of the original French edition, his published letters were scattered among a dozen or so small assemblages, each limited to one or two epistolary partners, some of them in back issues of rather obscure French periodicals. Access was cumbersome. François Lesure, the head of the music division of the Bibliothèque Nationale, who has already put us in his debt for a comprehensive edition of Debussy's critical prose (*Debussy on Music*), has made a very judicious selection.

I found practically all the Debussy letters I remembered to look for. The one excluded favorite: to Stravinsky, August 19, 1913, with wry thanks for the dedication of "Le Roi des étoiles"—in Russian, "Zvezdoliki"—including the observation that "it's probably the very 'harmony of the eternal spheres' of which Plato speaks (but don't ask me on what page!)" and the—alas, accurate—prediction that the cantata would receive more performances on Sirius or Aldebaran than on "our more modest planet." Roger Nichols, who has been a ranking English-speaking Debussian since his biography of the composer, has augmented Lesure's text with an additional 56 letters—including a handful, mainly

of taste—what you might call “the triumph of the Brasserie.” It smells of tobacco and there are whiskers all over it. Just to give you one brief example, the final movement of the symphony represents the Moulin Rouge where the poet (surprise, surprise!) has reached his ultimate degradation, complete with a prostitute who utters orgasmic moans.

Poor music, when I see people like that dragging you in the mud!

But of course, the people *were* the mud. Although, as Lesure astutely points out in his introduction, “no other composer has ever been so committed to finding ways of revitalizing music from outside the musical world,” Debussy’s world beyond was the world of art and the world of nature, not the world of men. One finds representations aplenty in his instrumental music of the sea, of the wind, of gardens in the rain and balconies in the moonlight, but precious few of people, unless viewed en masse and from afar (“Fêtes”), or unless mythical (fauns, sirens), artificial (Golliwog, alias “Le petit Nigar”), or already embodied in art (“Danseuses de Delphes”). His landscapes are uninhabited (even if they bear traces of former habitation, as in “Des Pas sur la neige”). His, in sum, was not an art of empathy. In the same letter to Poniatowski, he wrote that music is “not even the

expression of feeling, it’s the feeling itself.” (Stravinsky, trying to echo this exquisite distillation of formalist sentiment 40 years later, fumbled badly.) Least of all was Debussy’s art introspective or “sincere.”

Zealous commitment to high culture at its most rarefied—attended inevitably by fear at the prospect of its contamination at the hands of the mob, always hungry for sensation—led Debussy into an affected purism. “Music really ought to have been a hermetical science,” he writes at one point, “enshrined in texts so hard and laborious to decipher as to

discourage the herd of people who treat it as casually as they do a handkerchief! I’d go further and, instead of spreading music among the populace, I propose the foundation of a ‘Society of Musical Esotericism.’”

As early as the 1880s, his correspondence is full of “decadent” enthusiasm for old ciphers and texts: Bach, it goes without saying, especially as decoded by that precious aesthete Pierre Louÿs, Debussy’s closest friend at the time, at his

it’s very simple and pure in style, quite different from so many of the others, which are dominated by a riot of sculptures, paintings, and mosaics—all rather too theatrical for my taste. . . . The Anima is certainly the right place to hear that kind of music, the only church music I regard as legitimate. That of Gounod & Co. strikes me as the product of hysterical mysticism—it’s like a sinister practical joke. The two above-named gentlemen are true masters, especially Orlando, who is more decorative, more human than Palestrina. I’m

truly amazed at the effects they can get simply from a vast knowledge of counterpoint. I expect you think of counterpoint as the most forbidding article in the whole of music. But in their hands it becomes something wonderful, adding an extraordinary depth to the meaning of the words. And every now and then the melodic lines unroll and expand, reminding you of the illuminations in ancient missals. And these are the only occasions when my real musical self has given a slight stir.

This fin-de-siècle antiquarianism did not impede the search for the new. Debussy was seduced by Orlando into an emulation not of the latter’s counterpoint, but rather of his purity, his decorativeness, his freedom from theatricality and hysteria. Counterpoint as such was a thing of the academy, from which (after he’d been through the mill with honors) Debussy re-

tained a horror of technical routine that lasted and grew to his dying day. Not even Bach was spared toward the end. In the last year of his life Debussy accepted a commission from his publisher Durand to edit the six sonatas for violin and the three for viola da gamba with harpsichord. “Never correct J. S. Bach’s accompanied violin sonatas on a rainy Sunday!” he wrote back to Durand:

I’ve just finished revising [them] and I can feel the rain within me. . . . If he’d had a friend—a publisher, perhaps—who could have told him to take a day off every week, perhaps, then we’d have been



DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

harmonium. (“Nobody else plays me Bach with those delightful imaginative touches with which you alone know how to adorn such antiquities.”) But he also embraced “*les maîtres primitifs*,” as one called them then, meaning, by and large, the composers of the Counter-Reformation. To an early supporter he wrote back, during his unhappy Rome Prize sojourn at the Villa Medici:

I must tell you about my only outing this month. I went to hear two masses, one by Palestrina, the other by Orlando de Lassus, in a church called the [Santa Maria dell’] Anima. . . . I liked [the Anima] very much;

spared several hundreds of pages in which you have to walk between rows of mercilessly regulated and joyless bars, each one with its rascally little "subject" and "countersubject."

In fact he was full of contempt for the materials of his art. They were to be transcended, not "mastered." He set no store by *métier*. Facility nauseated him, his own above all; and this is what kept him from being prolific. The letters dating from the early phases of work on *Pelléas* (1894-95) are especially full of struggle against the crudity of the *matière sonore*, and raillery at the limits that training placed on fantasy: "I've spent days trying to capture that 'nothing' that *Mélisande* is made of." "[Arkel] comes from beyond the grave and has that objective, prophetic gentleness of those who are soon to die—all of which has to be expressed with doh, ray, me, fah, sol, lah, te doh!!! What a profession!" "Impossible to count how often since Gluck people have died to the chord of the sixth, and now, from Manon to Isolde, they do it to the diminished seventh! And as for that idiotic thing called a perfect triad, it's only a habit, like going to a café!" Ditto harmonic relations: tonic and dominant had become "empty shadows of use only to stupid children." Fifteen years later, his main accomplishment behind him, his mind withal unchanged, Debussy could still work himself into a lather at

the many who don't hear music for itself but for what, to their ears, it brings with it

of traditions laboriously learned; and they can't change these without running the risk of no longer understanding anything. . . . It's the sort of blind, idiotic superstition which goes on for centuries and spreads itself over everything that's submitted to human judgment.

As for the seat of superstition, "the Conservatoire remains the same gloomy, dirty place we remember, where the dust of unhealthy traditions still sticks to the fingers."

SENTIMENTS like these come easy to the outsider. Adolescents and charlatans, as well as geniuses, profess them daily. What made them hard and heroic was that Debussy was an insider, or could have been. Instead he willingly alienated himself from the seats of musical power, preferring to operate on the margins of Parisian musical life. Long after he had settled with his second wife into a respectable family life in a suburban house with garden, wearing three-piece suits even on the beach, he remained resolutely Bohemian in his art, preferring, as ever, the company of poets and painters to that of his fellow musicians—which is what has led to so many misleading attempts to pigeonhole him as an Impressionist or a Symbolist.

Unlike the established composers of his time and place, Debussy could not bear to write in standardized rhetorical forms. There are no symphonies or concertos in his catalog (until the war years, no sonatas either). His opera, written against every tradition of the genre, exhausted him; it remains a single, un-repeated essay. "Artists themselves have a struggle not simply to create new stereotypes in place of the old," he warned himself. That is why, alone among his generation, he resisted Wagner. Hailed everywhere as a musical messiah who opened the door to the future, Wagner, for Debussy, had only closed the door on the past, irrevocably. He too had to be exorcised. "I was premature in crying 'success' over [an early sketch for] *Pelléas et Mélisande*," he confided to Ernest Chausson. "After a sleepless night (the bringer of truth) I had to admit it wouldn't do at all. It was like the duet by M. So-and-so, or nobody in particular, and worst of all the ghost of old Kling-sor, alias R. Wagner, kept appearing in the corner of a bar, so I've torn the whole thing up."

The combination of attitudes and aptitudes that Debussy's letters enable us to trace, which together define his posi-

tion as first among musical modernists, was a rare compound of highly volatile elements: hermetic elitism, aristocratic detachment, *recherché* aestheticism, disgust at rhetoric, belief in masterpieces and in individual greatness, scorn for *métier* (justified by secure possession of same), contempt for authority, abhorrence of routine, rejection of expression but not of sensuous appeal, faith in an ultimate simplicity, insistence above all on scrupulous exactitude of realization and the uniqueness of the individual creative act. "The emotional satisfaction one gets from putting the right chord in the right place can't be equalled in any of the other arts," he wrote ecstatically in 1915, after a year of blocked inactivity. "Forgive me. I sound as if I've just discovered music. But in all humility, that's rather what I feel like." In all truth, that's exactly what he did.

THE DEBUSSY compound has long since broken down. Nothing like it exists in the world of music today, and hasn't, to be precise, since the death of Edgard Varèse (a protégé of Debussy) in 1965. Present claimants to the mantle of High Modernism, who have enshrined Debussy in their pantheon (and thereby asserted proprietary rights to his legacy), share with him only his elitism. In every other way they are antipodal to him, for his paramount article of faith was opposition to the academy. Those who call themselves his heirs today are the academy. They are supported by powerful institutions both private (the great American universities) and public (Pierre Boulez's IRCAM), and they are every bit as authoritarian as the institutions from which Debussy held himself aloof.

Where Debussy contended with his mighty forebears out of principle, his heirs have embraced a willing epigonism. One of their number, Charles Wuorinen, speaking a quarter century ago on behalf of his generation of young university composers, prefaced a sternly prescriptive enumeration of the tenets of what we continue with a straight face to call the "academic avant-garde" by noting that "it is probably safe to say that the major 20th-century revolutions in musical thought are behind us." Wuorinen then continued: "So many aspects of the musical achievements of the first half of the century are as yet undigested that the present generation of young composers must concern itself more with consolidation and synthesis, with acting out the implications of the older genera-

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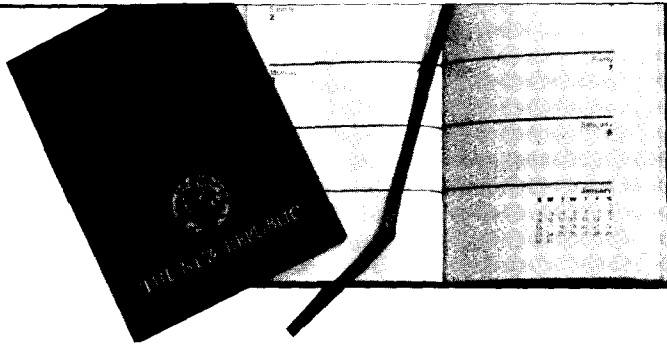


tion's work, than with innovation."

And so they have been doing, with all that the phrase "consolidation and synthesis" implies about veneration of authority, obsession with *métier*, exaltation of professional routine, reactionary resistance to innovation. What Debussy would have thought of their pyrotechnics, in which neither communication nor sensuous decorativeness subsists, and in which the specific realization of a hard-won simplicity is sacrificed to generalized theorizing of a facile complexity, can be inferred easily enough from his attitude toward the academic routiniers he knew. Were he to surface today, he would surely be cried down by the Wuorinens and the Boulezes as a "postmodernist."

BUT INTO that camp he fits no better, for he insisted on an absolute demarcation between popular culture and high culture, between art and non-art; he would have recoiled from "postmodernist" relativism and stylistic promiscuity as from something cynical and impure. His was an art that sought to address both the cerebral cortex *and* the autonomic nervous system. There is precious little music being written today that does not seem to deny the existence of the one or the other. Reading the intimate, if taciturn, confessions of music's first modernist has deepened in me the uneasy sense that since Stravinsky's death we have been living in an age dominated by Glazunovs and Leoncavallos—precisely what, minus Debussy, Debussy's age would have been; precisely what, minus a few unpredictable and exceptional figures, all ages are.

Nor is that the end of gloomy reflection to which this fascinating book gives rise. The improbable Debussian compound held together only so long as one particular ingredient, all but ubiquitous in the art of the later 19th century, was somehow miraculously withheld from it. Listing his hates in 1895, he included, alongside the expected "crowds and universal suffrage," something that Nichols translates as "nationalistic phrases." (It is *les phrases tricolores* in the original.) The First World War changed all that. Debussy began waving the tricolor everywhere. His wonted artistic intransigence took on a new and sinister tint. "The longer I live," he wrote in 1912, as the alliances and ententes were hardening, "the more I find we're wrong to forget our past and listen to foreign voices which don't per-



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haps sing as well in tune as our own!"

After the war began, he preached to the composer of *Le Sacre du printemps* (as converted a soul as ever there was)—in a letter inadvertently mangled by Nichols, who leaves out the italicized phrase:

My dear Stravinsky, you are a great artist! Try your best to be a great Russian artist! [*Soyez de toutes vos forces, un grand artiste russe!*] It's a fine thing to belong to one's country, to be attached to the earth like the humblest of peasants! And when the foreigner sets foot on it, all the talk of the internationalists has a bitter taste.

Behind Stravinsky's back, to Robert Godet, Debussy revealed what prompted this gratuitous pep talk: "One asks oneself at the moment whose arms music might be falling into. The young Russian school is extending hers but, as I see it, they've become as un-Russian as can be. Stravinsky himself is leaning dangerously toward Schoenberg. . . ." The dark side of all this is fully bared when we read that the opera *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* "is a masterpiece, but it's not a masterpiece of French music."

What can this be if not a reference to the fact that Paul Dukas, its composer, was a Jew?

It is in this light that we have to understand Debussy's last works, the three "sonatas" (out of a projected set of six) through which he sought a *reprise de contact* with "*la musique classique française*." To be *classique* was a way of being *tricolore*. One thinks with a shudder of Debussy's probable response, had he lived, to the proto-fascist *rappel à l'ordre* issued between the wars, to which his *grand artiste russe* proved so susceptible, this forming the subtext of his—as of everyone's—"neoclassicism." Ezra Pound may have traveled further than any other artist to the beat of this drum, but he had plenty of company at the start of the march; and it is evident that Claude Debussy, *musicien française*, would have been of that number.

RICHARD TARUSKIN

Richard Taruskin is professor of music at the University of California, Berkeley.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Breakers

by Martin Walser

translated by Leila Vennewitz

(Henry Holt, 305 pp., \$18.95)

Martin Walser—who is not to be confused with the pixilating Swiss stylist Robert Walser (1878-1956)—is the closest thing the West Germans have to John Updike. The comparison sounds facile, and it may not please either Updike or Walser (or it may), but it does help to locate some of the salient attributes of this emerging European master.

Near contemporaries—Walser was born in 1927, Updike in 1932—both writers are shrewd, bemused ironists presiding over the middle zone of the human spectrum. They are, on the whole, more interested in how society works, in how its members make their terms with existence, than in the ways it fails. In their attentiveness to the bright minutiae of the daily round—our social, financial, and sexual skirmishes—they could be called the anthropologists of postwar urban (and suburban) tribalism. While Walser is not

quite as prolific as Updike, he needn't be ashamed of his output. In the last decade he has published *Runaway Horse* (1978), *The Inner Man* (1979), *The Swan Villa* (1980), *Letter to Lord Liszt* (1982), and the recently translated *Breakers* (1985). Leila Vennewitz, his gifted translator, has been matching him step for step.

Of course, the Updike comparison can only carry so far. It collapses entirely where style is concerned. Walser is quick and notational, his sentences twitching like the needle on a rotating seismograph cylinder. Updike's prose, by contrast, is brocaded and static. Thematically, too, there are differences. Updike likes to rehearse various scenes from what used to be called "the battle of the sexes." Walser, though he does often write of husbands and wives, seems to reserve his best energies for capturing the myriad bonds and enmities that flourish between heterosexual males.

In *Runaway Horse*, Helmut and Sabrina Halm, who have gone to Lake Constance for Helmut's academic vacation, meet up with his boyhood friend, Klaus Buch, and his beautiful young wife, Helle. While transverse waves of sexual interest certainly pass between Helmut and Helle, the real propelling force of the narrative emerges from the subtly presented clash of wills between the two men. Similarly, in *The Swan Villa*, real estate agent Gottlieb Zürn goes through the most protracted Machiavellian exertions simply to get the better of his arch-competitor, Paul Schatz. And *Letter to Lord Liszt* is finally nothing more than Franz Horn's detailed epistolary accounting of his love-hate relationship with his business colleague, the man he has facetiously dubbed "Lord" Liszt.

At the beginning of *Breakers*, all indications are that another major hormonal duet will soon be sounding. Helmut Halm, who may yet turn out to be Walser's Harry Angstom, is again the protagonist. A dyspeptic 46 in *Runaway Horse*, Halm is a few years older but otherwise unchanged. As the novel opens, he receives a phone call from his old and all-but-forgotten friend Rainer Mersjohann. Mersjohann is calling Stuttgart from California because he needs a favor. Can Helmut take a semester's leave from his gymnasium post to fill an unexpected vacancy at Washington University (read: Berkeley)? Helmut hesitates. Then, in spite of and because of Sabrina's objections, he agrees.

A few pages later, Helmut, Sabrina, and their grown-up daughter, Lena, are at the airport in San Francisco, waiting for their host to arrive. Helmut has been regaling the women with stories about the legendary Mersjohann: the giant, the poet, the man with the enormous, beautiful hands. When he finally arrives, Helmut nearly goes into shock:

No one could have a clearer mental image of Rainer than he did. He could have drawn or painted Rainer and reproduced him in any medium on earth; but this, he instantly saw, wasn't Rainer Mersjohann. . . . The man who now sat at the other end of the front seat was a stranger. Corpulent, with sagging bluish cheeks, and hanging from those cheeks a colorless curly beard that met under the double chin.

Helmut, as any reader of *Runaway Horse* will know, is a most agreeably disagreeable protagonist. He is cynical and self-involved. He is also a quivering bundle of anxieties and equilibrating vices; he cannot live without his cigars

and his daily bottle of wine. But his first exposure to Mersjohann convinces him that he's a tyro—the man has downed five cans of beer before he's even taken his coat off. Tensions are already high. We brace ourselves for the bitter male imbroglio that's sure to follow.

IT DOESN'T. Just this once, Walser decides to break pattern. Against our every expectation of idiosyncrasy, he does the shocking thing—he writes the conventional genre novel, at least most of one. The baffling Mersjohann will soon recede into the middle distance; our visiting professor will become desperately infatuated with . . . you guessed it, a beautiful student. And this, I think, is the time to say it: there is no more life in the professor-meets-student premise—none.

Walser makes the setup breathlessly episodic. Scarcely have the Halms settled themselves into their atmospheric hillside house before Helmut is off to his duties. Washington University is established with quick snapshots. A modernist collage of buildings. Interspersed redwoods and sequoias. American youth everywhere, healthy, tanned, lounging in the pretzel poses of dramatic leisure. Helmut instantly meets Mrs. Carol Elrod, the all-seeing department secretary. Just as quickly he is fumbling his way through his first German class. We get his distracted, peripheral observations. One student, for instance, wears a T-shirt that reads: "SMALL THINGS AMUSE GREAT MINDS." Notes Helmut: "Between the line ending with THINGS and the one starting with AMUSE were the small things that weren't small." This ground has been tilled for millennia.

It is after this first class that Helmut comes face to face with tall, blond, scantily clad Fran. She compliments his teaching, walks back toward the department offices with him. Her beauty and her assertiveness make Helmut nervous. A moment later he is chagrined—both Mersjohann and Carol Elrod have seen them walking together. And he hears about it soon after: "Carol said it was her fault: she should have warned Halm of the typical California college girl—blond, Porsche, father a doctor in Pacific Heights, San Francisco, and sharper than a shark's tooth." The warning is necessary; it is also, naturally, useless.

We could write the rest of the story on the back of a cocktail napkin—professor finds himself attracted to student, professor's wife has to leave to care for dy-

ing father, leaving professor free to . . . Walser does, to be fair, depart here and there from the clichés of the genre. Helmut never finds his way into bed with Fran, for one thing. But this may be more a problem than a saving grace. For if anything keeps *Breakers* from coming to life, it's the lack of the kinds of tensions that arise out of character development. The putative love interest is just too slight. Walser has not created a female character worthy of the consternation that she seems to inspire in her teacher. She really *is* the typical California college girl, and Helmut loses many points for not recognizing this. The going need of the climacteric may be explanation enough in real-life situations, but fiction—at least in this sophisticated genre—demands a certain distillation and intensification of the quotidian. A good scene in the sack might have raised the temperature and the stakes—and forced a much-needed confrontation. As things stand, most of the plot centers on Helmut's conflicted and fragmented psyche. Which is finally not *that* interesting a place.

A predictable plot is one thing, an irritating stylistic mode is quite another.

But reading *Breakers*, I had to wonder if in this instance the two were not causally related. Walser's normally quickstepping prose has here become abrupt, almost curt. It is as if Walser himself could not bear to linger on the obvious and wanted to show his impatience. One offhand remark follows another; scenes are pruned back before they can grow into anything. Helmut is pushed through it all like a sedated extraterrestrial, a stranger in a strange land:

He was just about to invite Mrs. Elrod for lunch when he discovered that he had lost his wallet. A galvanizing shock. He simply could not afford to lose his wallet. It seemed best to behave as if he unfortunately already had a lunch engagement. "Aha," said Mrs. Elrod. He pretended to have no idea of what she meant and said casually that his wife and friend were coming to lunch. Good God, where were these lies leading him? And why, he asked himself? See you this afternoon, then.

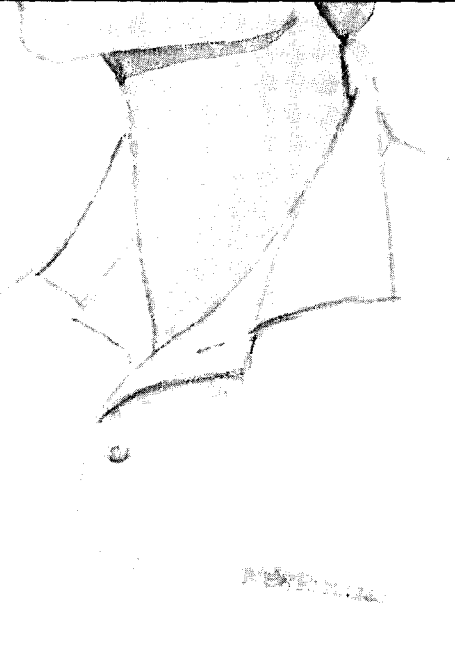
This shutter speed is fine for certain situations, but when it is used unremittingly—as it is in this novel—it becomes increasingly bothersome.

Walser was not, it appears, driven either by the imperatives of plot or style in

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composing *Breakers*. Perhaps he was aiming for satire. Dour German professor comes to swinging California, confronts American culture, academia, midlife urges, *und so weiter*. For some reason, though, Walser is just not able to draw blood. He hits at easy targets—American youth, faculty parties, departmental subterfuges, marital disaffection—but he hits them the easy way. Straight on. The reader would do much better to pick up David Lodge or Malcolm Bradbury—they order this sort of thing better in England.

It is unfortunate that this lesser work by Walser comes just when he has begun to earn a name for himself among serious readers. Potential fans and converts may turn away with a shrug. Still, when I referred to Walser at the outset as an emerging European master, I intended the compliment. Novels like *The Swan Villa*, *Runaway Horse*, and *Letter to*

Lord Liszt are charged with satiric and serious (the terms are not always antonyms) life. Walser has a special handle on the German sensibility—he charts its erratic oscillations between unreserved bonhomie and the severest punctilio. His obsessive, self-loathing, aggressively obstinate males reflect some of the deeper formations of the national soul. If you changed the names and places in any of these books, in an effort to Americanize them, the result would be ludicrous—as ludicrous as trying to retell *Huckleberry Finn* in a Rhenish setting. Walser is German to the bone. I hope that the future finds him once again cultivating the home garden.

SVEN BIRKERTS

Sven Birkerts is the author of *An Artificial Wilderness: Essays on Twentieth-Century Literature* (Morrow).

ACTS

So little to be done and so much time.
I nearly told the giddy mob outside
the Pentecostal church they might go home
—for all the good they'd do—or spend the evening
with their own queer group there on the lawn
instead of squeezing again into their failing
busses for another dose of humility
at selected crossroads, the worst parts of town.

But I know these types too well. If I had
said a word, the tall boy with those startling ears
and disquieting blue skin would be the one
to bleat some trembling prayer while the others
quivering as if shocked would lay on me
a crown of hands. So I just stood there,
watching their sincere, low-rent theater,
this eager preparation for their war.

Years ago, I was unlucky enough
to find another of these witless boys
shouting at my corner, cataloguing
sin with an astonishing lack of charm.
In time the crowd abandoned humor, but
they couldn't shut him up. From that grim press,
another boy—some squat lump with rolled sleeves—
approached the believer and slapped him hard.

When the witness didn't move, the hand
came up again. As the third blow barked I found
myself shoving in, hating both of them,
but pulling out the one I hated most
and pulling him to my own door. Away
from the jubilant cattle at the crossing,
my indiscreet relation dropped wholly
down, forsaking all for his appalling tongues.

SCOTT CAIRNS

TRB, from page 4

hind that. A point of view which, in my opinion, most accorded with the situation—that we should hold the Congress on schedule and draw all healthy forces of society into the preparation for it—ultimately prevailed.” Plucky Mikhail!

When it comes to bitchiness—a key ingredient of any best-selling memoir, as their publishers surely told them—Gorbachev goes for the hammer while Trump wields a delicate sickle. Trump on a fellow developer: “Abe has always been considered difficult. But I like him and his family a lot.” Gorbo, by contrast, on Khrushchev’s “We will bury you” speech: “Probably the most hackneyed statement by a Soviet leader in the West.”

On the other hand, Gorbachev’s book offers far better value in that other essential ingredient of the tell-all best seller: total-recall transcripts of conversations with other celebs. My favorite is a surrealistic discussion with West German president Richard von Weizsäcker about the concept of a “common European home,” in which Weizsäcker remarks that he doesn’t care for the lack of visitation rights between the apartments of this home, or for the trench running through the living room. The author explains helpfully: “He is referring to the fact that the FRG and the GDR [the two Germanys] are divided by an international border passing, in particular, through Berlin.”

Then there’s this:

Mikhail Gorbachev [to an American tourist]:
Have you encountered even one instance of
a disrespectful attitude toward Americans
during your stay?

D. Padula: No, though a man in the street
once asked me, when would there be
peace? I told him I hoped peace would come
soon.

Mikhail Gorbachev: This is very interesting
information.

Well, maybe David Mamet can work on it for the screenplay.

Ironically, though, it is Trump who gets the last word in both books. “I . . . plan to keep making deals, big deals, and right around the clock,” his own concludes. Gorbachev says, in a pun the American right will sadly concur with: “The past two-and-a-half years have given us a great deal.” He goes on to opine, “Now the whole world needs restructuring, i.e., progressive development. . . .” *Perestroika*—restructuring—and development are one and the same thing! Developer Trump for party chairman! On to full cost accounting! □

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Faith

THIS WEEK'S "ALF" will not be shown tonight so we can bring you the following special program: A conversation with Jesus Christ. Ladies and gentlemen, Tom Brokaw.

"This is Tom Brokaw in Jerusalem. Next week, as most of you know, the Messiah will come again. NBC News is proud that He has taken time out of His busy schedule to be with us tonight for an exclusive interview. Let me start by asking the question that I know is on everybody's mind. Jesus, why now?"

"Well, Tom, I'd first like to say how happy I am—how happy all Three of Us are—to be here tonight with all of you. Especially with you, Tom. Looking into your heart, I know you're a busy man. After your one-on-one with that godless Communist last week, and with the presidential race heating up, I'm glad you could squeeze the Son of God into your programming schedule."

"You're welcome, Jesus. Last week, I discussed with Mikhail Gorbachev the prospects of a major breakthrough on ICBMs at the summit. How do you think the Second Coming could affect this?"

"Well, I've been on background for so many centuries, but let me stay on background a few moments more, if I may. If the exchange ratio of fishes to loaves can be worked out, Tom, well, like you, I'm for it. But let's stop talking about me, Tom. Let's talk about you. I've been watching you for many years. What was it like way back on a radio station in Omaha? Do you ever think back to those days?"

"I'll be frank with you, Jesus. I had no idea then that now I'd be sitting across a table from Bob Dole one day and talking to, well, a living God the next. You know, your audience share has gone up since the first millennium, just like mine. I guess you really were the first anchor-man, weren't you?"

"Well, Tom, I was in camera, but never on camera, so to speak. The camera loves you, Tom. So do I. But tell me about Brokaw the man. What do you discuss, alone, at night, with your ego?"

"We discuss everything."

"Even what to ask my beloved Jesse?"

"We discuss everything."

A RECENT "POLL" of Soviet citizens by a French agency came up with one interesting—and convincing—fact. Asked which country they most saw as the enemy, a majority of Russians dutifully testified to the benefits of a free state education by identifying the United States. More sobering was who came second: West Germany. Of course, it shouldn't come as a surprise. Part of the Soviet craving for INF stems from Muscovite neurosis about weapons wielded by the great rival to the West; hence also the fixity of the Berlin Wall, Moscow's opposition to a reunified Germany, and the severe sentence for Mathias Rust. (The last time a German flew into Moscow it wasn't on a peace mission.) Still, the Russians should get over the panic. According to *The Manipulator*, an aptly named new Euro-trash magazine published in Düsseldorf and now available in America, Gorbo has nothing to worry about. In an article analyzing the new *Weltanschauung* of the *Kohljugend*, Bruce Stockler writes: "The Wall is starting to get on my nerves. It never changes, never grows a flower, never says something stupid at a party. Our identity is wrapped in concrete and barbed wire, which really clashes with the new Italian linens." Weimar, eat your heart out. Still, Bruce is in touch with his past: "Sometimes late at night I go into the basement and put on my father's old uniform. . . . I never knew my father, but wearing his uniform I feel a greatness press upon me. Maybe it just needs dry cleaning." Wait a minute, Ron, how many warheads have we got left? Bruce doesn't exactly inspire confidence in inflexible response: "I want to look powerful and I want to feel strong. But still I like my shirts soft—even fluffy. Like my father and his father before him, I rejoice in the idea that strength is a virtue . . . but unlike my father and his father before him, I can't stand to wear anything starched. I get a big rash."

SO MUCH FOR THE idealism that's supposed to break upon us in the Reagan hangover. If you're expecting a fresh burst of RFK and flower-power, it's obviously not coming from Düsseldorf. And if you're expecting it from Delaware either, don't hold your breath. My bet is the '90s will herald a self-

indulgence that'll make the Reagan era seem positively naive. In a way, of course, it was: the supply-side/Reagan doctrine/family values catechism of the neoconservatives required the kind of faith only the truly innocent can muster. The chastened '90s will probably lack such freshness of hypocrisy. To some extent, that has to be a relief: it's hard to think of a better argument for decadence than Oliver North. And on current trends, the next geist to hit the zeit won't disappoint the skeptics. Thanks to AIDS and a mild dose of austerity, anonymity is set to be replaced by exclusivity; promiscuous sex by various forms of masturbation; the straggling vestiges of substance in public life and culture by an even more vicious concentration on the sensibility of "style." As for idealism, it can only take the form of a starkly disillusioned variety—the kind Disraeli presciently depicted in *Tancred*: "I am born in an age and in a country divided between infidelity on the one side and an anarchy of creeds on the other; with none competent to guide me, yet feeling that I must believe, for I hold that duty cannot exist without faith."

GEORGE MICHAEL UPDATE: there's no rest for the Tipper. This time, the monogamy-pusher of "I Want Your Sex" has turned his gaze to religion: the new album, *Faith*, begins with the waftings of organ music. Born-again George is once again resisting the temptations of the flesh: "I need someone to hold me but I'll wait for something more . . . Yes I've got to have faith." Unfortunately some of the moral fire peters out in the plea for pedophilia on the next track: "I will be your father figure: put your tiny hand in mine/I will be your preacher teacher, anything you have in mind." Michael's only excuse at this stage is either one of coy double entendre or the fact that he sings every vocal line himself, even in the duets. In this lies not only the ultimate alibi, but also the solution to the great national debate over the precise meaning of "I want your sex." Of course he's not talking about his wife. He's not even talking about his girlfriend. He's talking about himself.

A. S.



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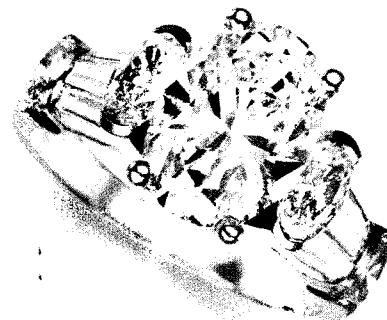
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